
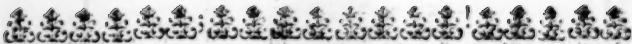


FEBR. 27. 1666.

*Tractatus cui Titulus, The
Rule of Faith, A doctis-
simo Viro Iohanne Til-
lotson scriptus Imprima-
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THE
Rule of Faith :
or
an ANSWER to the
TREATISE of Mr. I. S.
entituled,
Sure-footing, &c.

By JOHN TILLOTSON, D.D. Preacher to
the Honourable Society of *Lincoln's-Inn*.

To which is Adjoined
A R E P L Y
TO
Mr. I. S. his 3^d APPENDIX, &c.

By EDW. STILLINGFLEET D. D.
One of His Majesties Chaplains in Ordinary.

The second Edition.

LONDON, Printed by H.C. for O. Gellibrand,
at the Golden-Ball in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1676.

18th of March

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To my Honoured and
Learned Friend, Mr.
Edward Stillingfleet.

S I R,

I Have with a great deal of pleasure
and satisfaction read over your
Book, which I find in every part
answerable to its Title, viz. A Ra-
tional Account of the Grounds of Pro-
testant Religion. And now I thank you
for it, not only as a private favour, but
a publick benefit. No sooner had I per-
used it, but I met with a Discourse en-
titled, Sure-footing in Christianity.
And although I have no small prejudice
against Books with conceited Titles, yet
I was tempted to look into this, because
it pretended to contain Animadversions
on some Passages in your Book which I
had so lately read over. Upon perusal
of which Animadversions, I found that
the Author of them had attacked (and
in his own opinion confuted) a page or
two in your Book. This drew me on to
take a view of his main Discourses;
which because they are in great vogue
A 3 among

among some of his own Party, and do with an unusual kind of confidence and ostentation pretend to the newest and most exact fashion of writing Controversie, as being all along demonstrative and built upon self-evident Principles: Therefore I resolved throughly to examine them, that I might discover (if I could) upon what so firm and solid Foundations this High and Mighty Confidence was built.

But before I had entred upon this undertaking, I met with a Letter from the Author of Sure-footing to his Answerer, directing him how he ought to demean himself in his Answer. In which Letter, though there be many things liable to great exception, yet because I am unwilling to be diverted from the main Question, I shall not argue with him about any of those matters, only take leave to use the same liberty in managing my Answer, which he hath assumed to himself, in prescribing Laws to me about it: Therefore without taking any further notice of his Letter, I address myself to his Book.

THE RULE of FAITH.

PART. I.

The Explication and State of the Question.

SECT. I.

§ 1.



He Question he propounds to himself to debate, is, *What is the Rule of Faith?* In order to the resolution wherof, he endeavours,

The Explication of the Terms of the Question.

First, To fix the true notion of these two Terms, *Rule*, and *Faith*. Which way of proceeding I cannot but allow to be very proper and reasonable; but I can by no means think his explication of those Terms to be sufficient. He tells us, That *a Rule is that which is able to regulate, or guide him that useth it*: In which description, as in many other passages of his Book, he is plainly guilty of that which he taxeth

* P. 180.

in Mr. * *Whitby*, that is, the confounding of a *Rule* and a *Guide*, by making *Regulating* and *Guiding* to be equivalent words. But for this I am no further concerned, than to take notice of it by the way : The fault which I find in this *definition* is, that it doth not make the thing plainer than it was before; so that no man is the wiser for it, nor one jot nearer knowing what a *Rule* is. He pretends to tell *English-men* what a *Rule* is; and for their clearer understanding of this *word*, he explains it by a *word* less remov'd from the *Latine*, *A Rule is that which is able to regulate him that useth it*; just as if a man should go about to explain what a *Law-giver* is, by saying, *he is one that hath the power of Legislation*. Of the two, he had much better have said, that a *Rule* is a thing that is able to rule him that useth it, though this be nothing but an explication of the same *word* by it self.

* P. 4.

§ 2. Not much better is his explication of the term *Faith*, which he tells us, *in the common sense of Mankind, is the same with Believing*. * He declar'd indeed before-hand, that he did not intend to give rigorous *School-definitions* of either this or the former *word*; and (to do him right) he hath not in the

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the least swerv'd from his intention. It were to be wish'd he had prefac'd some such thing to his *Demonstrations*; for the Reader will find, that they are not one whit more *rigorous* than his *Definitions*; the latter of which doth very much resemble the Country-man's way of defining, who being ask'd by his Neighbour what an *Invasion* was, after some study, told him very gravely, that an *Invasion* was as if he should say an *Invasion*: In like manner Mr. S. tells us, that *Faith* (or which is all one, *Belief*) is the same with *Believing*; which in my apprehension is but a Country-definition, unless the interposing of those solemn words [*in the common sense of Mankind*] may be thought to mend the matter. This puts me in mind of what Mr. S. says in his * *Transition* (as he calls it) where he gives the Reader an account what feats he hath done in his Book: *He will see* (says he) *I take my Rise at the meaning of the words Rule and Faith; this known, I establish my First Principles in this present matter, to be these, viz. A Rule is a Rule, Faith is Faith.* This is the right *self-evident method* he talks so much of, and his *Principles* agree admirably well with his *Definitions*. If he had but proceeded in the same method, and

* P. 159

added, that *A Rule of Faith is a Rule of Faith*; that *Oral Tradition is Oral Tradition*; and that to say, *Oral Tradition is the Rule of Faith*, is as much as to say, *Oral Tradition is the Rule of Faith*, the whole business had been concluded without any more ado; and I think no body would have gone about to confute him.

§ 3. Rejecting then his way of Definition, as inept and frivolous, and no ways tending to give a man a clearer notion of things, I shall endeavour to explain a little better (if I can) the meaning of these Terms.

A *Rule* (when we speak of a *Rule of Faith*) is a Metaphorical word, which in its first and proper sense being applied to *material* and *sensible* things, is the *Measure* according to which we judg of the straightness and crookedness of things. And from hence it is transferred by analogy to things *moral* or *intellectual*. A *moral Rule* is the *Measure* according to which we judg, whether a thing be *good* or *evil*; and this kind of Rule is that which is commonly called a *Law*, and the agreement or disagreement of our actions to this Rule, is suitably to the Metaphor called *rectitude*, or *obliquity*.

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obliquity. An *intellectual Rule* is the *Measure* according to which we judg whether a thing be *true* or *false*; and this is either *general*, or more *particular*. Common notions, and the acknowledged Principles of Reason, are that *general Rule*, according to which we judg whether a thing be *true* or *false*. The particular Principles of every Science are the more particular Rules, according to which we judg whether things in that Science be *true* or *false*. So that the *general* notion of a *Rule* is, that it is a *measure*, by the agreement or disagreement to which we judg of all things of that kind to which it belongs.

§ 4. *Faith*, though both among sacred and prophane Writers, it be used many times more *generally*, for a perswasion or assent of the mind to any thing wrought in us by any kind of argument; yet, as it is a Term of Art used by *Divines*, it signifies that *particular* kind of assent which is wrought in us by *Testimony* or *Authority*. So that *Divine Faith*, which we are now speaking of, is an assent to a thing upon the testimony or authority of God, or, which is all one, an assent to a truth upon *Divine revelation*.

§ 5. A *Rule of Faith* is the *Measure*, according to which we judg what matters we are to assent to, as revealed to us by God, and what not. And more particularly, the *Rule of Christian faith* is the Measure, according to which we are to judg what we ought to assent to, as the Doctrine revealed by *Christ* to the world, and what not.

§ 6. So that this Question, *What is the Rule of Christian faith?* supposeth a Doctrine revealed by Christ to the world; and that *that* Doctrine was intelligibly and entirely delivered by Christ to his Apostles, and sufficient confirmation given to it; that this Doctrine was in the same manner published to the world by the Apostles, who likewise gave sufficient evidence of the truth of it. All this is necessarily supposed in the Question: For it would be in vain to enquire whether this or that be the Rule of Christian Faith, if such a thing as the Christian Faith were not first supposed. When therefore we enquire what is the Rule of Christian Faith? the meaning of that enquiry is, by what way and means the knowledg of Christ's Doctrine is conveyed certainly down to us, who live at the distance of so many

many Ages from the time of it's first delivery; For this being known, we have the *Rule of Faith*; that is, a measure by which we may judg what we are to assent to, as the Doctrine of Christ, and what not. So that when any Question ariseth about any particular Proposition, whether this be part of Christ's Doctrine, we may be able by this *Rule* to resolve it.

SECT II.

§ 1. **T**He next thing to be considered is his resolution of this Question; by which we shall know what his opinion is concerning the *Rule of Faith*; for that being known, the Controversie between us will easily be stated. Mr. S's
Rule of
Faith.

His opinion in general is, that *oral* or *practical Tradition* (in opposition to *writing*; or any other way that can be assigned) is the *Rule of Faith*. By *oral* or *practical Tradition*, he means * a delivery down from * P. 41. hand to hand (by words, and a constant course of frequent and visible actions, conformable to those words) of the sense and faith of Forefathers.

§ 2. Now, that I may bring the Controversie between us to a clear state, I am first

to take a more particular view of his Opinion concerning the *Rule of Faith*, that so I may the better understand how much he attributes to Oral Tradition, and what to the Scriptures, or written Tradition. And then I am to lay down the Protestant *Rule of Faith*, that so it may appear how far we agree, and how far we differ. The sum of what he attributes to Oral Tradition, so far as can be collected out of so obscure and confused a Discourse, may be reduced to these five Heads.

§. 3. *First*, That the Doctrine of Christian Religion was delivered by Christ to the Apostles, and by them published to the World; and that the Age which first received it from the Apostles, delivered it as they received it, without any change or corruption to their Children, and they to theirs, and so it went on solely by this way of Oral Tradition. This is the sum of his Explication of Tradition, *Disc. 5th.*

§. 4. *Secondly*, That this way alone is not only sufficient to convey this Doctrine down to all Ages certainly, and without any alteration; but it is the only possible way that can be imagined, of conveying
down

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down a Doctrine securely from one Age to another. And this is the natural result of his Discourse about the *Properties* of a *Rule of Faith*: For if the true Properties of a *Rule of Faith* do belong to Oral Tradition, then it is a sufficient means; and if those Properties do solely and essentially appertain to it, and are incompatible to any thing else (as he endeavours to prove) then it is impossible there should be any other way.

§ 5. *Thirdly*, That it is impossible this means should fail, or miss of its end; that is, the Doctrine of Christ being once put into this way of conveyance, it can neither cease to descend, nor be at any time corrupted or changed in its descent. This is that which his *Demonstrations* pretend to prove.

§ 6. *Fourthly*, That the infallibility of Oral Tradition, or the impossibility of its failing, is a first and self evident principle. This he frequently asserts throughout his Book.

§ 7. *Fifthly*, That this way of Oral Tradition, hath *de facto* in all Ages been acknowledged by Christians, as the only way and means whereby the Doctrine of Chri-

Christianity hath been conveyed down to them. And this is that which he attempts to prove from the *Consent of Authority*.

[P. 117.

[P. 337.

§ 8. As for the Scriptures, he grants them indeed to have been written by men divinely inspired, and to contain a Divine Doctrine, even the same which is delivered by Oral Tradition; so he tells us *, *'Tis certain the Apostles taught the same Doctrine they writ.* But then he denies it to be of any use without Oral Tradition, because neither the *letter*, nor *sense* of it, can without that be ascertain'd; so he saith in his Letter to Dr. Casaubon *, *As for the Scriptures (ascertaining their letter and sense, which is done by Tradition) 'tis clear they are of incomparable value; not only for the Divine Doctrine contained in them, but also for many particular passages, whose source or first attestation not being universal, nor their nature much practical, might possibly have been lost in their conveyance down by Tradition.* Where, though he give the Scriptures very good words, it is to be understood, provided they will be subordinate, and acknowledg that they owe their sense and their being intelligible and useful to Oral Tradition. For if any man shall pre-
sume

sume to say, That this Book hath any certain sense without Oral Tradition; or that God can write plainly and intelligibly, and that this Book which he hath endited is so written, and doth not depend upon Tradition for its sense and interpretation; then the most scurrilous language is not bad enough for the Scriptures; then what are those Sacred Writings *, but *Ink variously figured in a Book *, unsensed Characters, waxen natur'd words, not yet sensed, nor having any certain Interpreter, but fit to be plaid upon diversly by quirks of wit; that is, apt to blunder and confound, but to clear little or nothing.* These, with many other disgraceful terms, he very liberally bestows upon Divine Oracles; the consideration whereof, did it not minister too much horror, would afford some comfort; for by this kind of rude usage, so familiar with him towards his Adversaries, one may reasonably conjecture, that he doth not reckon the Scriptures among his Friends.

§ 9. And whereas he saith, *That the Scriptures have preserv'd many particular passages, which because their source or first attestation was not universal, nor their nature much practical, might possibly have been lost in their conveyance down by Tradition;* this

*Append.
4th. p. 319.
*P. 68.

†

this is impossible, according to his *Hypothesis*. For it neither the Scriptures letter, nor the certain sense of it, as to the main body of Christian Doctrine, could have been secured without Oral Tradition; that is, if we could not have known that those passages which contain the main points of Christs Doctrine, either had been written by men divinely inspired, or what the sense of them was, but from the consonancy and agreement of those passages with the Doctrine which was orally preached by the Apostles; how can we be certain either of the letter or sense of other particular passages which must necessarily want this confirmation from Oral Tradition; because *their first attestation was not universal, nor their nature much practical*? Nay, his discourse plainly implies, that we can have no security at all either of the letter or sense of any other parts of Scripture, but only those which are coincident with the main body of Christian Doctrine, as is evident from these words *, *Tradition established, the Church is provided of a certain and infallible Rule to preserve a copy of the Scriptures Letter truly significative of Christs sense, as far as it is coincident with the main body of Christian Doctrine preached at first;*

* P. 116.

first; because sense writ in mens hearts by Tradition, can easily guide them to correct the alteration of the outward letter. This I perceive plainly is the thing they would be at, they would correct the outward letter of Scripture by sense written in their hearts; and then, instead of leaving out the second Commandement, they would change it into a precept of giving due worship to Images, according to the Council of Trent; and a thousand other alterations they must make in the Bible, to make it truly significative of the sense of their Church. But surely the outward letter of other passages of Scripture, which were not intended to signifie points of Faith, is equally liable to alterations; and yet the Church is not by Tradition provided of any way to correct these alterations when they happen; because Tradition doth, as this Corollary implies, only furnish the Church with a certain and infallible Rule of preserving a copy of the Scriptures letter, so far as it is coincident with the main body of Christian Doctrine.

§ 10. Again, he tells us, *Tradition establi-* * p. 117.
shed, the Church is provided of a certain &
infallible Rule to interpret Scripture letter
by,

by, so as to arrive certainly at Christs sense, as far as the letter concerns the body of Christian Doctrine preached at first, or points requisite to Salvation. So that whatever he may attribute to Scripture for fashions sake, and to avoid Calumny with the Vulgar, as he says very ingenuously in his explication of the 15th Corollary; nevertheless 'tis plain, that according to his own *Hypothesis*, he cannot but look upon it as perfectly useless and pernicious. That 'tis altogether useless, according to his *Hypothesis*, is plain; for the main body of Christian Doctrine is securely conveyed to us without it, and it can give no kind of confirmation to it, because it receives all at its confirmation from it; only the Church is ever and anon put to a great deal of trouble to correct the alteration of the outward letter, by tradition and sense written in their hearts. And as for all other parts of Scripture which are not coincident with the main body of Christian Doctrine, we can have no certainty, either that the outward Letter is true; nor, if we could, can we possibly arrive at any certain sense of them. And that it is intolerably pernicious, according to his *Hypothesis*, is plain, because * every silly and upstart Heresie fathers it self upon it; and when

when men leave Tradition (as he supposeth all Hereticks do) the Scripture is the most dangerous engine that could have been invented ; being to such Persons only ** waxen natured words, not sensed, nor having any certain Interpreter ; but fit to be play'd upon diversly by quirks of wit ; that is, apt to blunder and confound, but to clear little or nothing.* And indeed, if

his *Hypothesis* were true, the Scriptures might well deserve all the contemptuous language which he useth against them; and

** Mr. White's comparison of them with Lilly's Almanack, would not only be pardonable, but proper ; and (unless he added it*

out of prudence, and for the Peoples sake, whom he may think too superstitiously conceited of those Books) he might have spared that cold excuse which he makes for using this similitude, that it was agreeable rather to the impertinency of the Objection than the dignity of the Subject. Certain

it is, if these men are true to their own Principles, that notwithstanding the high reverence and esteem pretended to be born by them and their Church to the Scriptures, they must heartily despise them, and wish them out of the way, and even look upon it as a great oversight of the Divine

Provi-

** Apology
for tradi-
tion, p.
165.*

Providence to trouble his Church with a Book, which, if their Discourse be of any consequence, can stand Catholicks in no stead at all, and is so dangerous and mischievous a weapon in the hands of Hereticks.

SECT. III.

The Protestant
Doctrine
concern-
ing the
*Rule of
Faith.*

§ 1. **H**AVING thus taken a view of his opinion, and considered how much he attributes to Oral Tradition, and how little to the Scriptures; before I assail this *Hypothesis*, I shall lay down the Protestant *Rule of Faith*; not that so much is necessary for the answering of his Book; but that he may have no colour of objection, that I proceed altogether in the destructive way, and overthrow his *Principle*, as he calls it, without substituting another in its room. The opinion then of the Protestants concerning the *Rule of faith*, is this in general, That those Books which we call the Holy Scriptures, are the means whereby the Christian Doctrine hath been brought down to us. And that he may now clearly understand this, together with the grounds of it, (which in reason he ought to have done before he had forsaken us) I shall declare it more particularly in these following Propositions. § 2.

§ 2. 1. That the Doctrine of Christian Religion was by Christ delivered to the Apostles, and by them first preached to the World, and afterwards by them committed to Writing; which Writings, or Books, have been transmitted from one age to another down to us. So far I take to be granted by our present Adversaries. That the Christian Doctrine was by Christ delivered to the Apostles, and by them publish'd to the World, is part of their own *Hypothesis*. That this Doctrine was afterwards by the Apostles committed to writing, he also grants, *Corol. 29.* * 'Tis certain * P. 117. *the Apostles taught the same Doctrine they writ*; and if so, it must be as certain that they writ the same Doctrine which they taught. I know it is the general Tenet of the Papists, that the Scriptures do not contain the entire body of Christian Doctrine; but that besides the Doctrines contained in Scripture, there are also others brought down to us, by oral or unwritten Tradition. But Mr. S. who supposeth the whole Doctrine of Christian Religion to be certainly conveyed down to us solely by oral Tradition, doth not any where, that I remember, deny that all the same Doctrine is contained in the Scriptures; only he de-

*P. 171.

nies the Scriptures to be a means sufficient to convey this Doctrine to us with certainty, so that we can by them be infallibly assured what is Christ's Doctrine, and what not. Nay, he seems in that passage I last cited, to grant this; in saying, that the Apostles did both teach and write the same Doctrine. I am sure Mr. *White* (whom he follows very closely throughout his whole Book) does not deny this, in his *Apology for Tradition*; * where he saith, that *it is not the Catholick position, that all its Doctrines are not contained in the Scriptures*. And that those Writings or Books which we call the Holy Scriptures, have been transmitted down to us, is unquestionable matter of fact, and granted universally by the Papists, as to all those Books which are owned by Protestants for Canonical.

§ 3. *Secondly*, That the way of Writing is a sufficient means to convey a Doctrine to the knowledg of those who live in times very remote from the age of its first delivery. According to his *Hypothesis*, there is no possible way of conveying a Doctrine with certainty and security, besides that of oral Tradition; the falshood of which will sufficiently appear, when I shall have shewn, that

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that the true properties of a Rule of Faith do agree to the Scriptures, and not to oral Tradition. In the mean time, I shall only offer this to his consideration, that whatever can be orally delivered in plain and intelligible words, may be written in the same words; and that a Writing or Book which is publick, and in every ones hand, may be conveyed down with at least as much certainty and security, and with as little danger of alteration as an oral Tradition. And if so, I understand not what can render it impossible for a Book to convey down a Doctrine to the knowledg of after-ages. Besides, if he had looked well about him, he could not but have apprehended some little inconvenience in making that an essential part of his *Hypothesis*, which is contradicted by plain and constant experience: For that any kind of Doctrine may be sufficiently conveyed, by Books, to the knowledg of after-ages; provided those Books be but written intelligibly, and preserved from change and corruption in the conveyance, (both which I shall be so bold as to suppose possible) is as little doubted by the generality of mankind, as that there are Books. And surely we Christians cannot think it impossible to

convey a Doctrine to posterity by Books, when we consider that God himself pitched upon this way for conveyance of the Doctrine of the Jewish Religion to after-ages; because it is not likely that so wise an Agent should pitch upon a means whereby it was impossible he should attain his end.

P. 38, 39.

§ 4. *Thirdly*, That the Books of Scripture are sufficiently plain, as to all things necessary to be believed, and practised. He that denies this, ought in reason to instance in some necessary point of Faith, or matter of Practice, which is not in some place of Scripture or other plainly delivered. For it is not a sufficient objection to say, * that the greatest wits among the Protestants differ about the sense of those Texts, wherein the generality of them suppose the Divinity of Christ to be plainly and clearly expressed: Because, if nothing were to be accounted sufficiently plain, but what it is impossible a great wit should be able to wrest to any other sense; not only the Scriptures, but all other Books; and (which is worst of all to him that makes this objection) all oral Tradition would fall into uncertainty. Doth the Traditionary Church pretend

pretend that the Doctrine of Christ's Divinity is conveyed down to her by oral Tradition, more plainly than it is expressed in Scripture? I would fain know what plainer words she ever used to express this point of Faith by, than what the Scripture useth; which expressly calls him *God, the true God, God over all, blessed for evermore*. If it be said, that those who deny the Divinity of Christ have been able to evade these and all other Texts of Scripture, but they could never elude the definitions of the Church in that matter; it is easily answered, that the same Arts would equally have eluded both; but there was no reason why they should trouble themselves so much about the latter; for why should they be solicitous to wrest the definitions of *Councils*, and conform them to their own opinion, who had no regard to the Churches Authority? If those *great Wits* (as he calls them) had believed the sayings of Scripture to be of no greater authority than the definitions of Councils, they would have answered texts of Scripture, as they have done the definitions of Councils; not by endeavouring to interpret them to another sense, but by downright denying their Authority. So

that it seems that *oral Tradition* is liable to the same inconvenience with the *written*, as to this particular.

§ 5. And of this I shall give him a plain instance in two *great Wits* of their Church, the *present Pope*, and *Mr. White*; the one the *Head* of the *Traditionary Church*, as *Mr. S.* calls it; the other the *great Master* of the *Traditionary Doctrine*. These two *great Wits*, notwithstanding the plainness of *oral Tradition*, and the impossibility of being ignorant of it, or mistaking it, have yet been so unhappy as to differ about several points of Faith; in-somuch that *Mr. White* is unkindly censured for it at *Rome*, and perhaps here in *Englind* the *Pope* speeds no better; however, the difference continues still so wide, that *Mr. White* hath thought fit to disobey the summons of his chief Pastor, and like a prudent man, rather to write against him here out of harms-way, than to venture the infallibility of plain *oral Tradition* for the *Doctrines* he maintains, against a *practical Tradition* which they have at *Rome* of killing Hereticks.

—
Methinks *Mr. S.* might have spared his brags, that he *bath evinced from clear reason*,

son, * that it is far more impossible to make * P. 54.
a man not to be, than not to know what is
rivetted into his soul by so oft repeated sen-
sations, (as the Christian Faith is by Oral
and Practical Tradition) and that it ex-
ceeds all the power of Nature (abstracting
from the cases of madness, and violent
disease) to blot knowledg thus fixt out of
the soul of one single Believer; insomuch,
that sooner may all mankind perish, than
the regulative vertue of Tradition miscar-
ry; nay, sooner may the sinews of entire
nature by overstraining crack, and she lose
all her activity and motion, that is, her
self; than one single part of that innume-
rable multitude which integrate the vast
testification, which we call Tradition, can
possibly be violated; when after he hath
told us, * that the City of Rome was blest
with more vigorous causes to imprint * P. 116.
Christ's Doctrine at first, and recommend it
to the next Age, than were found any where
else; and consequently, that the stream of
Tradition in its source and first putting in-
to motion, was more particularly vigorous
there than in any other See; and that the
chief Pastor of that See hath a particular
Title to Infallibility built upon Tradition,
above any other Pastor whatsoever; not

to dilate on the particular assistances to that Bishop, springing out of his divinely constituted Office; when, I say, after all this quaint Reason and rumbling Rhetorick about the infallibility of Oral Tradition, and the particular infallibility of the Bishop of Rome built on Tradition; we cannot but remember, that this great Oracle of Oral Tradition the Pope, and this great Master of it Mr. White, who is so peculiarly skill'd in the Rule of Faith, have so manifestly declar'd themselves to differ in points of Faith. For that the Pope and his Congregation general at Rome have condemn'd all his Books for this reason, because * they contain several Propositions manifestly heretical, is a sign that these two great Wits do not very well hit it in matters of Faith; and either that they do not both agree in the same Rule of Faith, or that one of them does not rightly understand it, or not follow it. And now, why may not that which Mr. S. unjustly says concerning the use of Scripture, be upon this account justly apply'd to the business of Oral Tradition *? If we see two such eminent Wits among the Papists (the Pope, and Mr. White) making use of the self-same, and as they conceive, the best advantages

Mr. Wh.
Exetastic.
P. 9.

P. 39.

vantages their *Rule of Faith* gives them; and *availing themselves the best they can by acquired skills*, yet differ about matters of Faith; *what certainty can we undertakingly promise to weaker heads, that is to the generality of the Papists*, in whom the Governors of the Church do professedly cherish ignorance for the increasing of their devotion.

§ 6. *Fourthly*, We have sufficient assurance that the Books of Scripture are conveyed down to us, without any material corruption or alteration. And he that denies this, must either reject the authority of all Books, because we cannot be certain whether they be the same now that they were at first; or else, give some probable reason why these should be more liable to corruption than others. But any man that considers things, will easily find that it is much more improbable that these Books should have been either wilfully or involuntarily corrupted, in any thing material to Faith or a good Life, than any other Books in the World; whether we consider the peculiar Providence of God engaged for the preservation of them, or the peculiar circumstances of these Books. If they were written by men divinely inspired, and are of use to Christi-
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ans, as is acknowledged (at least in words) on all hands; nothing is more credible, than that the same Divine Providence which took care for the publishing of them, would likewise be concerned to preserve them entire. And if we consider the peculiar circumstances of these Books, we shall find it morally impossible, that they should have been materially corrupted, because being of universal and mighty concernment, and at first diffused into many hands, and soon after translated into most Languages, and most passages in them cited in Books now extant, and all these now agreeing in all matters of importance, we have as great assurance as can be had concerning any thing of this nature, that they have not suffered any material alteration, and far greater than any man can have concerning the incorruption of their oral Tradition, as I shall shew when I come to answer the *thing* which he calls Demonstration.

§ 7. *Fifthly*, That *de facto* the Scripture hath been acknowledged by all Christians, in former Ages, to be the means whereby the doctrine of Christ hath with greatest certainty been conveyed to them. One good evidence of this is, That the Primitive

tive Adversaries of Christian Religion did always look upon the Scripture as the standard and measure of the Christian Doctrine, and in all their writing against Christianity, took that for granted to be the Christian Faith which was contained in those Books; there having not as yet any Philosopher risen up who had demonstrated to the World, that a Doctrine could not with sufficient certainty and clearness be conveyed by writing from one Age to another. But how absurd had this method of confuting Christian Religion been, if it had been then the publick profession of Christians, that the Scriptures were not the *Rule* of their Faith? How easie had it been for the Fathers, who apologized for, and defended Christian Religion, to have told them they took a wrong measure of their Doctrine; for it was not the principle of Christians, that their Faith was conveyed to them by the Scriptures, and therefore it was a fond undertaking to attack their Religion that way; but if they would effectually argue against it, they ought to enquire what that Doctrine was which was orally delivered from father to son, without which the Scriptures could signify no more to them than an unknown *Cipher* with-

without a *Key*; being of themselves, without the light of Oral Tradition, only an heap of unintelligible words, *unsensed Characters*, and *Ink variously figured in a Book*; and therefore it was a gross mistake in them, to think they could understand the Christian Religion (like their own Philosophy) by reading of those Books, or confute it by confuting them. Thus the *Fathers* might have defended their Religion; nay, they ought in all reason to have taken this course, and to have appealed from those dead senseless Books, to the *true Rule of Faith, the living voice of the Church Essential*. But doth Mr. S. find any thing to this purpose in the *Apologies* of the *Fathers*? If he hath discover'd any such matter, he might do well to acquaint the World with it, and make them wiser; in the mean time, I shall inform him what I have found, that the *Fathers* never except against that method, but appeal frequently from the slanderous reports and misrepresentations which were made of their Doctrine to the Books of Scripture, as the true standard of it.

§ 8. Another *evidence* that Christians in all Ages since the Apostles times, have owned the Scriptures for the *Rule of their Faith*

Faith, is, That the *Fathers* in their *Homilies* did use constantly to declare to the People what they were to believe, and what they were to practise, out of the Scriptures; which had been most absurd and senseless, had they believed not the Scriptures, but something else to have been the Rule of Faith and Manners. For what could tend more to the seducing of the People from Mr. S's supposed *Rule of Faith Oral Tradition*, than to make a daily practise of declaring and confirming the Doctrins of the Christian Faith from the Scriptures? Had the antient Fathers been right for Mr. S's way, they would not have built their Doctrine upon Scripture; perhaps not have mentioned it, for fear of giving the people an occasion to grow familiar with so dangerous a Book; but rather (as their more prudent Posterity have done) would have lock'd it up from the people in an unknown Tongue, and have set open the stores of good wholesome Traditions; and instead of telling them (as they do most frequently) *thus saith the Scripture*, would only have told them, *this is the voice of the essential Church; thus it hath been delivered down by hand to us, from our Forefathers.*

§ 9. I might add for a *Third evidence*, the great malice of the Enemies and Persecutors of Christianity, against this Book ; and their cruel endeavours to extort it out of the hands of Christians, and destroy it out of the World, that by this means they might extirpate Christianity. For it seems they thought, that the abolishing of this Book would have been the ruine of that Religion. But (according to Mr. S's opinion) their malice wanted wit ; for had all the Bibles in the World been burnt, Christian Religion would nevertheless have been entirely preserv'd, and safely transmitted down to us *by sense written in mens hearts*, with the good help of of Mr. S's Demonstration. Nay, their Church would have been a great gainer by it : For this Occasion and Parent of all Heresie the *Scripture*, being once out of the way, she might have had all in her own hands, and by leading the people in the safe paths of Tradition, and consequently of Science, might have made them wise enough to obey. Well, but suppose the Persecutors of Christianity mistook themselves in their design, how came the Christians in those days to be so tenacious of this Book, that rather than deliver it, they would yield up themselves to torments
and

and death? And why did they look upon those who out of fear delivered up their Books, as Apostates and Renouncers of Christianity, if they had not thought this Book to be the great Instrument of their Faith and Salvation, and if it had really been of no greater consideration than Mr. Wh. and Mr. S. would make it? Why should they be so loth to part with a few *unsens'd Characters, waxen natur'd words, fit to be play'd upon diversly by quirks of wit, that is, apt to blunder and confound, but to clear little or nothing?* Why should they value their lives at so cheap a rate as to throw them away for a few insignificant scrawls, and to shed their blood for *a little Ink variously figured in a Book?* Did they not know, that the safety of Christianity did not depend upon this Book? Did no Christian then understand that, which (according to Mr. S.) no Christian can be ignorant of, *viz. that not the Scripture, but unmistakeable, indefectible Oral Tradition was the Rule of Faith?* Why did they not consider, that though this *Letter Rule* of Hereticks had been consum'd to ashes, yet their *Faith* would have lain safe, and *been preserved entire* in its * *Spiritual Causes, Men's minds,*
the

the noblest pieces in Nature? Some of them indeed did deliver up their Books, and were call'd *Traditores*, and I have some ground to believe, that these were the only *Traditionary Christians* of that time, and that the rest were Confessors and Martyrs for the *Letter Rule*. And if this be not evidence enough, that the Scriptures have always been acknowledged by Christians for the Rule of Faith, I shall, when I come to examine his Testimonies for Tradition, (with the good leave of his *distinction* between *Speculators* and *Testifiers*) prove by most exprefs Testimony, that it was the general opinion of the Fathers, *That the Scriptures are the Rule of Christian Faith*; and then, if his *demonstration* of the infallibility of Tradition will enforce that as *Testifiers*, they must needs have spoken otherwise, who can help it?

SECT. IV.

How much
Protestants
allow to
Oral Tra-
dition.

§. I. **H**AVING thus laid down the *Protestant Rule of Faith*, with the grounds of it; all that now remains for me to do, towards the clear and full stating of the Controversie between us, is to
take

take notice briefly, and with due limitations :

1. How much the Protestants do allow to Oral Tradition.

Secondly, What those things are which Mr. S, thinks fit to attribute to his *Rule of Faith*, which we see no cause to attribute to ours ; And when this is done, any one may easily discern how far we differ.

§ 2. 1. How much Protestants do allow to Oral Tradition.

First, We grant that Oral Tradition in some circumstances, may be a sufficient way of conveying a Doctrine ; but withall we deny, that such circumstances are now in being. In the first Ages of the World, when the *credenda* or *Articles* of Religion, and the *agenda* or *Precepts* of it, were but few, and such as had the evidence of Natural light ; When the World was contracted into a few Families in comparison, and the age of man ordinarily extended to six or seven hundred years ; it is easie to imagine, how such a doctrine, in such circumstances, might have been propagated by Oral Tradition, without any great change or alterations. *Adam* lived till *Methuselah* was above two hundred years
D old,

old, *Methuselah* lived till *Sem* was near an hundred, and *Sem* out-liv'd *Abraham*: So that this Tradition needed not pass through more than two hands, betwixt *Adam* and *Abraham*. But though this way was *sufficient* to have preserved Religion in the world, if men had not been wanting themselves; yet we find it did not prove *effectual*. For through the corruption and negligence of men after the Flood, (if not before) when the world began to multiply, and the age of man was shortned, the knowledg and worship of the one true God was generally lost in the world. And so far as appears by Scripture-History, (the only Record we have of those times) when God called out *Abraham* from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, the whole world was lapsed into Polytheisme and Idolatry. Therefore, for the greater security of Religion afterwards, when the posterity of *Abraham* was multiplied into a great Nation, the wisdom of God did not think fit to entrust the Doctrine of Religion any longer to the fallible and uncertain way of Tradition, but committed it to writing. Now that God pitched upon this way, after the world had sadly experienced the unsuccessfulness of the other, seems to be

be a very good evidence that this was the better and more secure way : it being the usual method of the Divine dispensations, not to go backwards, but to move towards perfection, and to proceed from that which is less perfect to that which is more. And the Apostles * reasoning concerning the two Covenants is very applicable to these two methods of conveying the Doctrine of Religion ; *if the first had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for a second.* *Hebr. 8.7.

§ 3. So likewise, when Christ revealed his Doctrine to the world, it was not in his life-time committed to writing ; because it was entertained but by a few, who were his disciples and followers, and who so long as he continued with them had a living Oracle to teach them. After his death the Apostles, who were to publish this Doctrine to the world, were assisted by an infallible Spirit, so as they were secured from error and mistake in the delivery of it. But when this extraordinary assistance failed, there was need of some other means to convey it to posterity, that so it might be a fixt and standing Rule of Faith and Manners to the end of the world. To this end the

providence of God took care to have it committed to writing. And that Mr. S. may see this is not a conjecture of Protestants, but the sense of former times, I shall refer him to St. Chrysostom, (*Homil. 1. in Matth.*) who tells us, *That Christ left nothing in writing to his Apostles; but in stead thereof did promise to bestow upon them the grace of his holy Spirit, saying, John 14. He shall bring all things to your remembrance, &c. But because in progress of time there were many grievous miscarriages both in matter of Opinion, and also of Life and Manners; therefore it was requisite that the memory of this Doctrine should be preserved by writing.* So long then as the Apostles lived, who were thus infallibly assisted, the way of Oral Tradition was secure, but no longer; nor even then from the nature of the thing, but from that extraordinary and supernatural assistance which accompanied the deliverers.

§ 4. And therefore it is no good way of Argument against the way of Tradition by writing, which he lays so much weight upon, * *That the Apostles and their Successors went not with Books in their hands to preach and deliver Christ's Doctrine, but words*

words in their mouths; and that primitive antiquity learned their faith by another method, a long time before many of those Books were universally spread among the vulgar. For what if there was no need of writing this Doctrine, whilst those living Oracles, the Apostles, were present with the Church? Doth it therefore follow that there was no need of it afterwards when the Apostles were dead, and that extraordinary and supernatural assistance was ceased? If the Preachers now adays could give us any such assurance, and confirm all they preach by such frequent, and publick, and unquestionable miracles as the Apostles did; then we need not examine the Doctrines they taught by any other Rule, but ought to regulate our belief by what they delivered to us. But seeing this is not the case, *that* ought in all reason to be the Rule of our Faith, which hath brought down to us the Doctrine of Christ with the greatest certainty: And this I shall prove the Scriptures to have done.

§ 5. So that in those circumstances I have mentioned, *We* allow Oral Tradition to have been a sufficient way of conveying a Doctrine; but now considering the great increase of mankind, and the shortness of

mans life in these latter ages of the world, and the long tract of time from the Apostles age down to us; and the innumerable accidents whereby, in the space of 1500 years, Oral Tradition might receive insensible alterations, so as at last to become quite another thing from what it was at first, by passing through many hands; in which passage, all the mistakes and corruptions which (in the several Ages through which it was transmitted) did happen, either through Ignorance, or Forgetfulness, or out of interest and design, are necessarily derived into the last: So that the further it goes, the more alteration it is liable to; because as it passeth along, more Errours and Corruptions are infused into it. I say, considering all this, we deny, that the Doctrine of Christian Religion could with any probable security and certainty have been conveyed down to us by the way of Oral Tradition. And therefore do reasonably believe, that God fore-seeing this, did in his wisdom so order things, that those persons who were assisted by an infallible spirit in the delivery of this Doctrine, should before they left the world commit it to

wri-

writing; which, was accordingly done: And by this Instrument, the Doctrine of Faith hath been conveyed down to us.

§ 6. *Secondly*, We allow, that Oral Tradition is a considerable assurance to us, that the Books of Scripture which we now have, are the very Books which were written by the Apostles and Evangelists; but withall we deny, That Oral Tradition is therefore to be accounted the *Rule of Faith*.

The general Assurance that we have concerning Books written long ago, that they are so ancient, and were written by those whose names they bear, is a constant and uncontroll'd Tradition of this, transmitted from one Age to another; partly Orally, and partly by the Testimony of other Books. Thus much is common to Scripture with other Books. But then the Scriptures have this peculiar advantage above other Books, that being of a greater and more universal concernment, they have been more common and in every bodies hands, more read and studied than any other Books in the World whatsoever; and consequently, they have a more universal and better grounded attestation. Moreover, they have not only
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been owned universally in all Ages by Christians (except three or four Books of them, which for some time were questioned by some Churches, but have since been generally received) but the greatest Enemies of our Religion, the Jews and Heathens, never questioned the Antiquity of them, but have always taken it for granted, that they were the very Books which the Apostles writ. And this is as great an assurance as we can have concerning any ancient Book, without a particular and immediate Revelation.

§ 7. And this Concession doth not, as M. S. supposeth, make Oral Tradition to be finally the *Rule of Faith*; for the meaning of this question, (*What is the Rule of Faith?*) Is, What is the next and immediate means whereby the knowledge of Christs Doctrine is conveyed to us? So that although Oral Tradition be the means whereby we come to know that these are the Books of Scripture, yet these Books are the next and immediate means whereby we come to know what is Christs Doctrine; and consequently, what we are to believe.

§ 8. Nor doth this Concession make
Oral

Oral Tradition to be the *Rule of Faith*, by a parity of Reason ; as if because we acknowledge that Oral Tradition can with sufficient certainty transmit a Book to After ages, we must therefore grant that it can with as much certainty convey a doctrine consisting of several Articles of Faith (nay very many, as Mr. *White* acknowledges *) and many Laws and Precepts of Life : So because Oral Tradition sufficiently assures us that *this is Magna Charta*, and that the *Statute-Book*, in which are contain'd those *Laws which it concerns every man to be skilful in* ; therefore by like parity of Reason it must follow, that Tradition it self is better than a Book, even *the best way imaginable, to convey down such Laws to us*. Mr. *S.* saith * expressly it is ; but how truly, I appeal to experience, and the wisdom of our Law-givers, who seem to think otherwise. Tradition is already defin'd to us, *a delivery down from hand to hand, of the sense and faith of Fore-fathers* ; i. e. of the Gospel, or message of Christ. Now suppose any Oral message, consisting of an hundred particularities, were to be delivered to an hundred several persons of different degrees of understanding and memory, by them to be conveyed to an hundred

* Rushw.
Dial. 4.
Sect. 9.

* p. 93.

dred more, who were to convey it to others, and so onwards, to a hundred descents; Is it probable this Message, with all the particularities of it, would be as truly conveyed through so many mouths, as if it were written down in so many Letters, concerning which every Bearer should need to say no more than this, That it was delivered to him as a Letter written by him whose name was subscribed to it? I think it not probable, though the mens lives were concerned every one for the faithful delivery of his Errand or Letter. For the *Letter* is a message which no man can mistake in, unless he will; but the *Errand* so difficult, and perplexed with its multitude of particulars, that it is an equal wager against every one of the Messengers, that he either forgets, or mistakes something in it; it is ten thousand to one, that the first Hundred do not all agree in it; it is a Million to one, that the next Succession do not all deliver it truly; for if any one of the first Hundred mistook, or forgot any thing, it is then impossible that he that received it from him should deliver it right; and so the farther it goes, the greater change it is liable to. Yet after all this I do not say, but it may be demonstrated, in Mr. S's way

way, to have more of certainty in it than the Original Letter.

§ 9. *Thirdly*, We allow, That the Doctrine of Christian Religion hath in all Ages been preached to the People by the Pastors of the Church, and taught by Christian Parents to their Children; but with great difference, by some more plainly, and truly, and perfectly; by others, with less care and exactness, according to the different degrees of ability and integrity in Pastors or Parents; and likewise with very different success, according to the different capacities and dispositions of the Learners. We allow likewise, That there hath been a constant course of visible actions, conformable in some measure to the Principles of Christianity; but then we say that those outward acts and circumstances of Religion may have undergone great variations, and received great change, by addition to them, and defalcation from them, in several Ages. That this not only is possible, but hath actually happened, I shall shew when I come to answer his Demonstrations. Now that several of the the main Doctrines of Faith contained in the Scripture, and actions therein commanded, have been taught

taught and practised by Christians in all Ages (as the Articles summed up in the Apostles Creed, the use of the two Sacraments) is a good evidence so far, that the Scriptures contain the Doctrine of Christian Religion. But then if we consider, how we come to know that such points of Faith have been taught, and such external Actions practised in all Ages, it is not enough to say, there is a present multitude of Christians that profess to have received such Doctrines as ever believed and practised, and from hence to infer that they were so; the inconsequence of which Argument, I shall have a better occasion to shew afterwards: But he that will prove this to any mans satisfaction, must make it evident from the best Monuments and Records of several Ages, that is, from the most Authentick Books of those times, that such Doctrines have in all those Ages been constantly and universally taught and practised. But then if from those Records of former times it appear, that other Doctrines, not contained in the Scriptures, were not taught and practised universally in all Ages, but have crept in by degrees, some in one Age, and some in another, according as Ignorance, and Superstition in
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Sect. 4. of FAITH.

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the People, Ambition and Interest in the chief Pastors of the Church, have ministred occasion and opportunity; and that the Innovators of these Doctrines and Practises, have all along pretended to confirm them out of Scripture, as the acknowledged *Rule of Faith*; and have likewise acknowledged the Books of Scripture to have descended without any material corruption or alteration, (all which will sufficiently appear in the process of my Discourse) then cannot the Oral and practical Tradition of the present Church, concerning any Doctrine, as ever believed and practised, which hath no real foundation in Scripture, be any argument against these Books, as if they did not fully and clearly contain the Christian Doctrine. And to say the Scripture is to be interpreted by Oral and Practical Tradition, is no more reasonable, than it would be to interpret the antient Books of the Law, by the present practise of it; which every one, that compares things fairly together, must acknowledg to be full of deviations from the antient Law,

SECT.

SECT. V.

How
much Mr.
S. attri-
butes to
his Rule
of Faith,
more than
Prote-
stants to
theirs.

§ 1. *2dly.* **H**OW much more he attri-
butes to his Rule of
Faith. than we think fit to attribute to
ours.

1. We do not say, that it is impossible
in the nature of the thing, that this Rule
should fail, that is, either that these Books
should cease to descend, or should be cor-
rupted. This we do not attribute to them,
because there is no need we should: We
believe the providence of God will take
care of them, and secure them from being
either lost, or materially corrupted; yet
we think it very possible, that all the Books
in the World may be burnt, or otherwise
destroyed. All that we affirm concerning
our Rule of Faith, is that it is abundantly
sufficient (if men be not wanting to them-
selves) to convey the Christian Doctrine
to all successive Ages; and we think him
very unreasonable, that expects that God
should do more than what is abundantly
enough, for the perpetuating of Christian
Religion in the world.

§ 2. *Secondly,* Nor do we say, that
that certainty and assurance which we
have

have, that these Books are the same that were written by the Apostles, is a *first* and *self-evident Principle*; but only that it is a truth capable of evidence sufficient, and as much as we can have for a thing of that nature. Mr. S. may, if he please, say that Traditions certainty is a first and self-evident Principle; but then he that says this, should take heed how he takes upon him to demonstrate it. *Aristotle* was so wise as never to demonstrate first Principles, for which he gives this very good reason, because they cannot be demonstrated. And most prudent men are of opinion, that a self-evident Principle, of all things in the World, should not be demonstrated, because it needs not. For to what purpose should a man write a Book to prove that which every man must assent to, without any proof, so soon as it is propounded to him? I have always taken a self-evident Principle to be such a Proposition; as having in it self sufficient evidence of its own truth, and not needing to be made evident by any thing else. If I be herein mistaken, I desire Mr. S. to inform me better.


§ 3. So that the true state of the Controversie between us, is, Whether *Oral* and

and *Practical Tradition*, in opposition to *Writing* and *Books*, be the only way and means whereby the Doctrine of Christ can with certainty and security be conveyed down to us, who live at this distance from the age of Christ and his Apostles? This *He* affirms, and the *Protestants* deny; not only that it is the sole means, but that it is sufficient for the certain conveyance of this Doctrine; and withall affirm, that this Doctrine hath been conveyed down to us by the Books of holy Scripture, as the proper measure and standard of our Religion: But then they do not exclude Oral Tradition from being the means of conveying to us the certain knowledg of these Books. Nor do they exclude the authentick Records of former Ages, nor the constant teaching and practise of this Doctrine, from being subordinate means and helps of conveying it from one age to another. Nay, so far are they from excluding these concurrent means, that they suppose them always to have been used, and to have been of great advantage for the propagating and explaining of this Doctrine, so far as they have been truly subordinate to, and regulated by these sacred Oracles, the Holy Scripture

tures; which, they say, do truly and fully contain that Doctrine which Christ delivered to his Apostles, and they preached to the world. To illustrate this by an instance; suppose there were a Controversy now on foot, how men might come to know what was the true *Art* of *Logick* which *Aristotle* taught his *Scholars*; and some should be of opinion, that the only way to know this would be by oral Tradition from his Scholars; which we might easily understand by consulting those of the present age, who learned it from those who received it from them, who at last had it from *Aristotle* himself: But others should think it the surest way to study his *Organon*, a Book acknowledged by all his Scholars, to have been written by himself, and to contain that Doctrine which he taught them. They, who take this latter course, suppose the authority of oral Tradition, for the conveying to them the knowledge of this Book; and do suppose this Doctrine to have been taught and practised in all Ages, and a great many Books to have been written by way of Comment and explication of this Doctrine; and that these have been good helps of promoting the knowledge of it. And they may well

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enough suppose all this, and yet be of opinion that the truest measure and standard of *Aristotle's* Doctrine is his own Book; and that it would be a fond thing in any man, by forcing an interpretation upon his Book either contrary to, or very foreign and remote from the obvious sense of his words, to go about to reconcile this Book with that method of disputing which is used by the professed *Aristotelians* of the present age, and withal that scholastick Jargon which Mr. S. learn'd at *Lisbon*, and has made him so great a man in the *Science of Controversie*, as to enable him to demonstrate *first* and self-evident Principles; a trick not to be learn'd out of *Aristotle's Organon*. The Application is so easy, that I need not make it.



THE RULE of FAITH.

PART. II.

*Concerning the Properties of the Rule
of Faith; and whether they agree
solely to Oral Tradition.*

SECT. I.

§ 1. **H**AVING thus endeavoured to bring the Controversy between us, to its clear and true state, that so we might not quarrel in the dark, and dispute about we know not what; I come now to grapple more closely with his Book. And the main foundations of his Discourse may be reduced to these three Heads.

First, That the essential Properties of such a way and means, as can with certainty and security convey down to us the Doctrine of Christ, belong solely to Oral Tradition. This he endeavors to prove in his *five first Discourses*.

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Secondly,

Secondly, That it is impossible that this way of Oral Tradition should fail. And this he pretends to prove in his *four* last *Discourses*.

Thirdly, That Oral Tradition hath been generally reputed by Christians in all Ages, the sole way and means of conveying down to them the Doctrine of Christ. And this he attempts to shew in his last Chapter, which he calls *The Consent of Authority to the substance of his foregoing Discourses*. If he make good these three things, he hath acquitted himself well in his undertaking. But whether he hath made them good or not, is now to be examined.

§ 2. *First*, Whether the essential Properties of such a way and means, as can with certainty and security convey down to us the knowledge of Christ's Doctrine, belong solely to Oral Tradition?

The true way to measure the essential Properties of this or that means, is by considering its sufficiency for its end. For whatsoever is necessary to make any means sufficient for the obtaining of its end, is to be reputed an essential Property of that Means, and nothing else.

else. Now, because the end we are speaking of, is the conveyance of the knowledge of Christ's Doctrine to all those who are concerned to know it, in such a manner as they may be sufficiently certain and secure that it hath received no change or corruption from what it was when it was first delivered. From hence it appears, that the means to this end must have these two Properties. 1. It must be sufficiently plain and intelligible. 2^{ly}. It must be sufficiently certain to us, *that is*, such as we may be fully satisfied concerning it, that it hath received no corruption or alteration. If it have these two conditions, it is sufficient for its end; but if it want either of them, it must necessarily fall short of its end. For if it be not plain and intelligible, it cannot convey this Doctrine to our knowledge; if it be not certain, we cannot be assured, that that Doctrine which it brings down to us for the Doctrine of Christ, is really such.

§ 3. I know he assigns more Properties of this Means which he calls the *Rule of Faith*; but upon examination it will appear, that they either fall in with these two, or do not at all belong to it. As,

¶ P. II.

*First, That * it must be plain and self-evident to all, as to its existence.* Nothing can be more frivolous, than to make this a Property of any thing; because whosoever enquires into the Properties of a thing, is supposed to be already satisfied that the thing is.

¶ P. II.

¶ P 3.

*Secondly, That it be * evidenceable, as to its Ruling power,* that is, as he explains himself, ** that men be capable of knowing, that it deserves to be relied on as a Rule.* By which he must either understand, the certainty of it; and then it falls in with the second Property I mentioned, and is the same with the sixth, which he lays down. Or else he means more generally, that it is the property of a Rule, that men be capable of knowing that it hath the Properties of a Rule. For I understand not, how a man can know that any thing deserves to be relied on as a Rule, otherwise than by knowing that it hath the properties of a Rule, *that is,* that it is sufficient for its end. But at this rate, a man may multiply the Properties of things without end, if the evidence of a thing, as to its existence, be one Property; and then, that we be capable of knowing that it is such a thing, be another.

§ 4. *Third-*

§ 4. *Thirdly*, That it be * *apt to settle*, P. 12,
and justify undoubting Persons. What
he means here, by *settling undoubting*
Persons, I am not able, on the sudden,
to comprehend; because I understand not
what unsettles a man besides doubting;
for if a man be but so well satisfied about
any thing, as to have no doubt concerning
it, I do not easily apprehend how he can
be settled better, *that is*, how his mind can
be more at rest, than not to doubt. But if
by *undoubting Persons*, he means those
who do not doubt for the present, but after-
wards may doubt, then I perceive what he
means by *apt to settle undoubting Persons*,
viz. *apt to settle Persons when they do*
doubt, that is, when they are *not undoubt-*
ing Persons. As for *justifying undoubting*
Persons, if he means that whosoever se-
curely relies on this Rule, ought of right
to be acquitted, as acting rationally in so
doing; this is plainly consequent upon the
two Properties I have laid down. For, if
the means of conveying Christ's Doctrine
be sufficiently plain and certain, every man
that relies upon it is justified in so doing,
because he trusts a means which is suffici-
ent for its end.

* P. 12.

§ 5. *Fourthly*, That * it be apt to satisfy fully the most Sceptical Dissenters, and Rational Doubters : For it's aptitude to satisfy Rational Doubters, that plainly follows from the sufficient certainty of it. But why it should be a necessary property of a Rule of Faith, to be apt to satisfy the most Sceptical Dissenter, I can no more divine, than I can, why he should call a Dissenter Sceptical, which are repugnant terms : For a Sceptick is one who neither assents to any thing, nor dissents, but is in a perpetual suspense ; because he looks upon every opinion, as balanced by a contrary opinion of equal probability, without any inclination of the Scales either way. But if by the most Sceptical Dissenter he means only a Sceptick, one that doth not believe the Doctrine of Christ, nor any thing else ; then would I fain know, what that is which in reason is apt fully to satisfy such a person. If any thing will, sure a Demonstration will ; but there is no aptitude at all in a Demonstration, to satisfy him who doubts whether there be any such thing as a Demonstration ; and likewise questions the certainty of all those Principles, from whence

whence any conclusion can be demonstrated. And those who are *most Sceptical*, profess to doubt of all this.

§ 6. *Fifthly*, That it ^{*}be apt to convince ^{*P. 11, 12.} the most obstinate, and acute Adversary. If the Rule be plain and certain, the most acute Adversary may be convinced by it if he will, *that is*, if he be not obstinate; but if he be obstinate, *that is*, such a one as will not be convinced, but will persist in his Error in despite of all evidence that can be offered him, then I must profess that I do not know any kind of evidence that is apt to convince that man that will not be convinced by any reason that can be propounded to him. And that he ought not to have expected this from any *Rule of Faith*, though never so self-evident, he might have learn't from the same *Author*, in whom he may find his chief *Properties of the Rule of Faith*, if he had but had the patience to have consider'd his Explanation of them; I mean Dr. *Holden* ^{*}, ^{* Analys. Fid. L. 1. c. 3.} who layes down the second Property of the *Rule of Faith*, (or, as he calls it, *the means whereby we come to the knowledge of Revealed Truth*) in these words, *Another (viz. Condition of this Means, &c.) is, That it be apt of its own Nature, to afford*
the

the greatest true and rational certainty, to all men without exception to whom the knowledge of it shall come; provided they be furnish'd with the faculty of Reason, and have their minds purified from all Passion and Lust, which do (as he tells us, Cap. 6.) often hinder the most sagacious Persons from understanding the most evident and manifest Truths. Now I suppose Obstinacy to be the effect of Passion and Lust.

If Mr. S. mean, that *the Rule of Faith* must be apt to conquer *Obstinacy*, and make men lay it aside, I cannot understand this neither; unless he mean, that the *Rule of Faith* must be a *Cudgel*, which the *Traditionary Church* have been good at, and may use it again when occasion serves; for none but they have Title to it *upon a Church-account*, as Mr. S. tells us, *Corol. 10.* But setting aside *this*, I do not know any thing else that is *apt to conquer Obstinacy*; Not the clearest Reason, or the strongest Demonstration; for that I am sure is no ways fitted to combat a wilful and unreasonable humour with any probability of success. And if any one doubt of this, if he will but make trial, he may easily be convinc'd by experience, how unapt obstinate Persons

Persons are to be convinc'd by Reason. I do not know any thing that ever carried greater evidence than the Doctrine of Christ, preached by himself and his Apostles to the obstinate *Jews*, and confirmed by multitudes of unquestionable miracles; and yet we do not find by the success of it, that it was so very apt to convince those that were obstinate. And no man can judge of the aptitude of a means to an end, otherwise than by the usual and frequent success of it when it is applied. Nor do I think that the Doctrine of the Gospel was ever intended for that purpose. God hath provided no remedy for the wilful and perverse, but he hath done that which is sufficient for the satisfying and winning over of those who are teachable and willing to learn: And such a disposition supposeth a man to have laid aside both *Scepticism* and *Obstinacy*.

§ 7. *Sixthly*, That * it be certain in it * P. 12.
self.

Seventhly, That * it be absolutely ascer- * P. 12.
tainable to us.

These two are comprehended in the second Property I laid down; so that I have nothing to say against them, but that the
last

last looks very like a contradiction, *absolutely ascertainable to us* ; which is to say, *with respect to us, without respect to us* ; for *absolutely* seems to exclude respect, and *to us* implies it.

Having thus shewn, that the seven *Properties* he mentions, are either coincident with those two I have laid down, or consequent upon them, or absurd and impertinent ; it remains, that the true *Properties* of a *Rule of Faith* are those two which I first named, and no more.

SECT. II.

That the
Properties
of a Rule
of Faith
belong to
Scripture.

§ 1. **L**et us now see how he endeavors to shew, that these *Properties* agree solely to Oral Tradition : He tells us there are but *two Pretenders* to this *Title* of being the *Rule of Faith, Scripture, and Oral Tradition* ; these *Properties* do not belong to *Scripture*, and they do to *Oral Tradition* ; therefore solely to it. A very good Argument, if he can prove these *two things, That these two Properties do not belong to Scripture ; and that they do to Oral Tradition.*

§ 2. In order to the proving of the *First*,
that

that these Properties do not belong to Scripture, he premiseth this Note, * * P. 13. *That we cannot by the Scriptures mean the sense of them, but the Book, that is, such or such Characters not yet sensed, or interpreted.* But why can we not, by the Scriptures, mean the sense of them? He gives this clear and admirable reason; because the sense of Scripture, is, *the things to be known, and these we confess are the very points of Faith, of which the Rule of Faith is to ascertain us.* Which is just as if a man should reason thus: Those who say the Statute-Book can convey to them the knowledg of the Statute-Law, cannot by the Statute-Book mean the sense of it, but the Book; that is, such or such Characters not yet sensed or interpreted: Because the sense of the Statute-Book is the things to be known; and these are the very Laws, the knowledg whereof is to be conveyed to them by this Book; which is to say, that a Book cannot convey to a man the knowledg of any matter, because if it did, it would convey to him the thing to be known. But that he may farther see what excellent reasoning this is, I shall apply this *Paragraph* to Oral Tradition; for the Argument holds every whit as well concerning that.

that. *To speak to them in their own language, who say that Oral Tradition is their Rule, we must premise this Note, that they cannot mean by Oral Tradition, the sense of it, that is, the things to be known; for those, they confess, are the very Points of Faith, of which the Rule of Faith is to ascertain us; when they say then, that Oral Tradition is the Rule of Faith, they can only mean by Oral Tradition, the words wherein it is delivered, not yet sensed or interpreted, but as yet to be sensed; that is, such or such sounds, with their aptness to signify to them assuredly God's mind, or ascertain them of their Faith; for abstracting from the sense, and actual signification of those words, there is nothing imaginable left but those sounds, with their aptness to signify it.* When he hath answered this Argument, he will have answered his own. In the mean while this Discourse, that he who holds the Scriptures to be the Rule of Faith, must needs by the Scriptures mean a Book void of sense, &c. Because otherwise, if by Scripture he should understand a Book, that hath a certain sense in it, that sense must be the Doctrine of Christ, which is the very thing that this Book is to convey to us; I say, this Discourse tends only

to prove it an absurd thing for any man, that holds Scripture the means of conveying Christ's Doctrine, to understand by the Scripture, a Book that conveys Christ's Doctrine. This being his own reason, put into plain English, I leave the Reader to judge, whether it be not something short of *perfect Science and Demonstration*. Nay, if it were thoroughly examined, "I doubt whether it would not fall short of that low pitch of Science which he speaks of in his *Preface*, where he tells us, that *the way of Science is to proceed from one piece of sense to another*."

§ 3. Having premised this, that by the Scriptures *we* must mean only dead Characters, that have no sense under them, He proceeds to shew that these dead Characters have not the Properties of a Rule of Faith belonging to them. Which, although it be nothing to the purpose when he hath shewn it, yet it is very pleasant to observe, by what cross and untoward Arguments he goes about it: Of which I will give the Reader a taste, by one or two instances.

In the first place he shews, that it cannot be evident to us that *these Books were written by men divinely inspired*, because
till

*P. 14.

* *till the seeming contradictions in those Books are solved; which to do, is one of the most difficult tasks in the world, they cannot be concluded to be of God's enditing.* Now how is this an Argument against those, who by the Scriptures, must mean unsensed letters and characters? I had always thought contradictions had been in the *sense* of words, not in the *letters* and *characters*; but I perceive he hath a peculiar opinion, that the four and twenty letters do contradict one another.

*P. 17.

The other instance shall be in his last Argument *, which is this, that the Scripture cannot be the *Rule of Faith*, because *those who are to be ruled and guided by the Scriptures letter to Faith*, cannot be *certain of the true sense of it*; which is to say, that *unsensed letters and characters* cannot be the *Rule of Faith*, because the *Rule of Faith* must have a certain sense, *that is*, must not be *unsensed letters and characters*; which in plain English amounts to thus much, *unsensed letters and characters cannot be the Rule of Faith, that they cannot.*

§ 4. And thus I might trace him through all his Properties of the *Rule of Faith*; and

and let the Reader see, how incomparably he demonstrates the fallhood of this Protestant Tenet (as he calls it) that a senseless Book may be a *Rule of Faith*. But I am weary of pursuing him in these airy and phantastical combats, and shall leave him to fight with his own fancies, and batter down the Castles which himself hath built. Only I think fit here to acquaint him, once for all, with a great Secret of the Protestant Doctrine, which it seems he hath hitherto been ignorant of (for I am still more confirmed in my opinion, that he forsook our Religion before he understood it) that when they say, the Scriptures are the *Rule of Faith*, or the means whereby Christ's Doctrine is conveyed down to them; they mean by the Scriptures, Books written in such words as do sufficiently express the sense and meaning of Christ's Doctrine.

§ 5. And to satisfy him, that we are not absurd and unreasonable in supposing the Scriptures to be such a Book, I would beg the favour of him to grant me these four things, or shew reason to the contrary.

First, That whatever can be spoken in plain and intelligible words, and such as have a certain sense, may be written in the same words.

Secondly, That the same words are as intelligible when they are written, as when they are spoken.

Thirdly, That God, if he please, can endite a Book in as plain words as any of his creatures.

Fourthly, That we have no reason to think that God affects obscurity, and envies that men should understand him, in those things which are necessary for them to know, and which must have been written to no purpose, if we cannot understand them. St. *Luke* * tells *Theophilus*, that he wrote the History of Christ to him, on purpose to give him a *certain knowledg* of those things which he writ. But how a Book which hath no *certain sense*, should give a man *certain knowledg* of things, is beyond my capacity. St. *John* * saith, that he purposely committed several of *Christ's* miracles to Writing, that men might believe on *Him*. But now had Mr. *S.* been at his elbow, he would have advised him to spare his labour, and would have given him this
good

* Luke i.
3. 4.

* John 20.
31.

good reason for it; because when he had written his Book, nobody would be able to find the certain sense of it without oral Tradition, and that alone would securely and intelligibly convey both the Doctrine of Christ, and the certain knowledge of those miracles which he wrought for the confirmation of it. If these four things be but granted, I see not why, when we say that the Scriptures are the means of conveying to us Christ's Doctrine, we may not be allow'd to understand by the Scriptures, a Book which doth in plain and intelligible words express to us this Doctrine.

SECT. III.

61. **A**ND now, although this might have been a sufficient Answer to his Exceptions against the Scriptures, as being incapable of the Properties of a *Rule of Faith*; because all of them suppose that which is apparently false and absurd, as granted by Protestants, viz. That the Scriptures are only an heap of dead letters, and insignificant characters, without any sense under them; and that oral Tradition is that

Mr. S's Ex-
ceptions
against
Scripture
examined.

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only which gives them life and sense; Yet because several of his Exceptions pretend to shew, that the true Properties of a Rule of Faith do not at all appertain to the Scriptures; therefore I shall give particular Answers to them; and as I go along, shew that Tradition is liable to all or most of those Exceptions, and to far greater than those.

*P. 13.

§ 2. Whereas he says, * it cannot be evident to Protestants, from their Principles, that the Books of Scripture were originally written by men divinely inspired; I will shew him that it may, and then answer the reasons of this Exception.

It is evident, from an universal, constant, and uncontrolled Tradition among Christians, not only oral, but written, and from the acknowledgment of the greatest Adversaries of our Religion, that these Books were originally written by the Apostles and Evangelists. And this is not only a Protestant Principle, but the Principle of all mankind, *That an undoubted Tradition is sufficient evidence of the Antiquity and Author of a Book*, and all the extrinsecal Argu-
ment

ment that can ordinarily be had of a Book written long ago.

Next, it is evident, that the Apostles were men divinely inspired, *that is*, secured from error and mistake in the writing of this Doctrine, from the miracles that were wrought for the confirmation of it. Because it is unreasonable to imagine that the Divine power should immediately interpose for the confirmation of a Doctrine, and give so eminent an attestation to the Apostles to convince the World that they were immediately appointed and commissioned by God, and yet not secure them from error in the delivery of it. And that such miracles were wrought, is evident from as credible Histories as we have for any of those things which we do most firmly believe. And this is better evidence that the Apostles were men divinely inspired, than bare oral Tradition can furnish us withal. For setting aside the authentic relation of these matters in Books, it is most probable, that oral Tradition of it self and without Books, would scarce have preserved the memory of any of those particular miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles, which are recorded in

Scripture. And for the probability of this, I offer these two things to his consideration.

First, No man can deny that memorable persons have lived, and actions been done in the world innumerable, whereof no History now extant makes any mention.

Secondly, He himself will grant, that our Saviour wrought innumerable more miracles, than are recorded in Scripture. And now I challenge him to shew the single vertue of oral Tradition, by giving an account of any of those persons, or their actions, who lived 1500 or 2000 years ago, besides those which are mentioned in Books; or to give a catalogue but of ten of those innumerable miracles wrought by our Saviour, which are not recorded by the Evangelists, with circumstances as punctual and particular as those are clothed withal. If he can do this, it will be a good evidence that oral Tradition singly and by it self can do something; but if he cannot, 'tis as plain an evidence on the contrary, that if those actions of former times, and those miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles, which are recorded in Books had

had never been written, but entrusted solely to oral Tradition, we should have heard as little of them at this day, as we do of those that were not written.

§ 3. Now to examine his Reasons for this Exception :

First, He saith, **'tis most manifest that* * P. 13. this cannot be made evident to the *vulgar*, that Scripture was written by men divinely inspired. This Reason is as easily answered, by saying *'tis most manifest that it can* : But besides saying so, I have shewed how it may be made as evident to the vulgar, as other things which they do most firmly and upon good grounds believe. Even the rudest of the vulgar, and those who cannot read, do believe upon very good grounds that there was such a King as *William the Conqueror* ; and the miracles of Christ and his Apostles are capable of as good evidence as we have for this.

Secondly, He says, * this cannot be evident to the *curious and most speculative Searchers*, but by so deep an inspection into the sense of Scripture, as shall discover

such secrets, that Philosophy, and human Industry could never have arrived to. As if we could not be assured that any thing were written by men divinely inspired, unless it were above the reach of human understanding; and as if no man could know that this was our Saviours Doctrine, Whatever ye would that men should do unto you, that do ye likewise unto them, because every one can understand it. But if there were more mysteries in the Scriptures than there are, I hope a man might be satisfied that they were written by men divinely inspired, without a clear comprehension of all those mysteries. The evidence of the inspiration of any person doth not depend upon the plainness or sublimity of the things revealed to him, but upon the goodness of the arguments which tend to perswade us that the person is so inspired: And the Argument that is most fit to satisfy us of that is, if he work miracles. Now I would gladly know why a learned man cannot be assured of a miracle, that is, a plain sensible matter of Fact done long ago, but by so deep an inspection into the sense of Scripture, as shall discover such
secrets

secrets that Philosophy and human Industry could never have arrived to.

§ 4. *Thirdly, Because * all the seem- * P. 14.*
ing contradictions of Scripture must be solved, before we can out of the bare letter conclude the Scripture to be of God's enditing; to solve which literally, plainly, and satisfactorily (he tells us) the memory of so many particulars, which made them clearer to those of the Age in which they were written, and the matter known, must needs be so worn out by tract of time, that it is one of the most difficult tasks in the World. As if we could not believe a Book to be of God's enditing, because there seem now to be some contradictions in it, which we have reason to believe could easily have been solved by those who lived in the Age in which it was written. Or as if oral Tradition could help a man to solve these contradictions, when the memory of particulars necessary for the clear solution of them is (as himself confesses) worn out by tract of time. If Mr. S. can, in order to the solution of the seeming contradictions of Scripture, demonstrate, that oral Tradition hath to
this

this day preserv'd the memory of those particulars (necessary for that purpose) the memory of which must needs be long since worn out by tract of time, then I will readily yield, that his Rule of Faith hath in this particular, the advantage of *ours*. But if he cannot do this, why does he make that an Argument against *our* Rule, which is as strong against *his own*? This is just like Capt. Everard's Friend's way of arguing against the *Protestants*, That they cannot rely upon Scripture because it is full of plain contradictions, impossible to be reconciled; and therefore they ought in all reason to submit to the infallibility of the Church. And for an instance of such a contradiction, he pitched upon the three *fourteen Generations* mentioned in the first of St. *Matthew*, because the third *Series* of Generations, if they be counted, will be found to be but thirteen. Not to mention now, how this difficulty hath been sufficiently satisfied both by Protestant and Popish Commentators, without any recourse to *oral Tradition*; that which I take notice of, is the unreasonableness of making this an Exception against the
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Protestants, when it comes with every whit as much force upon themselves. Suppose this Contradiction not capable of any solution by Protestants (as he affirms) and I should submit to the infallibility of the Church ; can he assure me, that infallibility can make thirteen, fourteen? If it cannot, how am I nearer satisfaction in this point, by acknowledging the infallibility of the Church? The case is the very same, as to Mr S's. Exception, if I owned oral Tradition, I should be never the nearer solving the seeming contradictions of Scripture, and consequently I could not in *Reason conclude it to be of God's enditing*. So that in truth, these Exceptions if they were true, would not strike at Protestancy, but at Christian Religion ; which is the general unhappiness of most of the Popish Arguments ; than which there is no greater evidence, that the Church of *Rome* is not the true Mother, because she had rather Christianity should be destroyed, than it should appear that any other Church hath a claim to it. It was a work very proper for the Heretick *Marcion*, to assault Religion this way ; who, as *Tertullian* * tells us, writ a whole

* L. I. contr.
Marcion.

whole Book, which he call'd *Antitheses*, wherein he reckoned up all the Contradictions (as he thought) between the Old and New Testament: But methinks it is very improper for the Papists who pretend to be the only true Christians in the World, to strain their wits to discover as many contradictions as they can in the Scripture, and to prove that there is no way of reconciling them: The natural consequence of which is, the exposing of this *sacred Instrument of our Religion*, and even *Christianity* it self, to the scorn of Atheists. Therefore, to be very plain with Mr. S. and Captain *Everard*, I am heartily sorry to see, that one of the chief fruits of their Conversion is to abuse the Bible.

[P. 14.]

§ 5. *Secondly*, He says * that Protestants cannot know *how many* the Books of Scripture ought to be, and *which of the many controverted ones may be securely put in that Catalogue, which not*; This he proves, by saying, 'tis most palpable, that few, or at least the rude vulgar, can never be assured of it. And if this be a good Argument, this again is a good Answer, to say it is not most palpable.

pable. But I shall deal more liberally, and tell him, that we know that just so many ought to be received as uncontroverted Books, concerning which, it cannot be shewn there was ever any Controversy; and so many as controverted, concerning which it appears that Question hath been made: And if those which have been controverted, have been since received by those Churches which once doubted of them, there is now no further doubt concerning them, because the Controversy about them is at an end. And now I would fain know, what greater certainty oral Tradition can give us of the true Catalogue of the Books of Scripture. For it must either acknowledg some Books have been controverted, or not; if not, why doth he make a supposition of controverted Books? If oral Tradition acknowledg some to have been controverted, then it cannot assure us that they have not been controverted; nor consequently, that they ought to be received as never having been controverted; but only as such, concerning which those Churches who did once raise a Controversy about them, have been since satisfied that they
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are Canonical. The Traditionary Church *now*, receives the Epistle to the *Hebrews* as Canonical. I ask, Do they receive it as ever delivered for such? That they must, if they receive it from oral Tradition, which conveys things to them under this notion, as ever delivered; and yet St. *Hierom* speaking, (not as a *Speculator*, but a *Testifier*) saith expressly of it, * *That the custom of the Latin Church doth not receive it among the Canonical Scriptures.* What saith Mr. S. to this? It is clear from this Testimony, that the *Roman Church* in St. *Hierom's* time, did not acknowledg this *Epistle* for Canonical; and 'tis as plain, that the present *Roman Church* doth receive it for Canonical. Where is then the *infallibility of oral Tradition*? How does the *living voice of the present Church* assure us, that what Books are now received by her were ever received by her? And if it cannot do this, but the matter must come to be tried by the best Records of former Ages, (which the Protestants are willing to have their Catalogue tried by) then it seems the Protestants have a better way to know what Books are Canonical, than is the infallible

* Com. in
Esaï. c. 6,
& c. 8.

lible way of oral Tradition; and so long as 'tis better, no matter though it be not called Infallible.

§ 6. *Thirdly*, He says * the Prote-^{* P. 15.}stants cannot know, *that the very Original, or a perfectly true copy of these Books hath been preserved.* It is not necessary that they should know either of these, it is sufficient that they know, that those copies which they have, are not materially corrupted in any matter of Faith or Practice; and that they have sufficient assurance of this, I have already shewn. And how doth he prove the contrary? By his usual Argument, with saying *it is manifestly impossible.* But how do the Church of Rome know that they have perfectly true copies of the Scriptures, in the Original Languages? They do not pretend to know this, the learned men of that Church acknowledged the various Readings as well as we, and do not pretend to know otherwise than by probable conjecture, (as we also may do) which of those Readings is the true one. And why should it be more necessary for us to know this, than for them? If they think it reasonable to
content

content themselves with knowing, that no material corruptions have crept into those Books, so may we. And that there have not, we know by better Arguments than oral Tradition, even by the assurance we have of God's vigilant providence; and from a moral impossibility in the thing, that a Book so universally dispersed, and translated into so many Languages, and constantly read in the Assemblies of Christians, should have been materially corrupted, so as that all those copies and translations should have agreed in those corruptions. And this reason St. *Austin* * gives of the preservation of the Scriptures entire rather than any other Book. If Mr. S. likes it not, he may call St. *Austin* to account for it.

* Ep. 48.

* P. 15.

§ 7. *Fourthly*, He says *, the Protestants, *at least the rudest-vulgar*, can have no assurance *that those Books are rightly translated*, because they cannot be assured either of the ability or integrity of Translators.

* P. 16, 17.

Fifthly, Nor can they (says * he) be assured, that the Transcribers, and Printers, and Correctors of the Press have
care-

carefully and faithfully done their part, in Transcribing and Printing the several Copies and Translations of Scripture aright; Because, *they only can have evidence of the right letter of Scripture, who stood at their elbows attentively watching they should not err in making it perfectly like a former Copy; and even then, why might they not mistrust their own eyes and aptness to oversee?* I put these two Exceptions together, because the same Answer will serve them both. The grounds of these Exceptions, if they have any, are these: That no man is to be trusted, either for his skill, or honesty. And, that it is dangerous for men to trust their own eyes. Unless both these be true, these Exceptions are of no force: For if we can be assured, that other men have sufficient skill in any thing which we our selves do not sufficiently understand, we may be assured, that those who translated the Bible had skill in the Original Languages; because very credible persons tell us so; and we have no reason to doubt their testimony in this particular, more than in any other matter. So that if we can have sufficient assurance of mens in-

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tegrity in any thing, we have no reason to doubt of the skill of Translators, or Transcribers, or Printers. And if we can have no assurance of mens integrity in any thing, then no man can be assured that there was such a man as *Henry the Eighth*; and yet I hope the Church of *Rome* makes no doubt of it: Nor can any man be assured there is such a City as *Rome*, who hath not seen it; nay, if he have *, *why may he not mistrust his own eyes*? And which is the saddest inconvenience of all, if no body be to be trusted, nor *mens own eyes*, (and for the same reason, sure not their *ears*) what becomes of the Infallibility of *oral and practical Tradition*? Which necessarily supposeth a competent understanding, a faithful memory, an honest mind, in the generality of those who delivered Christs Doctrine down to us: And by what means soever a man can be assured of these, by the same he may much more easily be assured of the ability and integrity of Translators, Transcribers, and Printers. But above all, it supposeth that mens *ears* and *eyes* cannot deceive them in those things which they are taught, and see practised.

* P. 16.

Is it not very pretty to see what pitiful shifts men that serve an *Hypothesis* are put to? When to maintain *Infallibility* they are forced to run to the *extremities of Scepticism*; and to defend the certainty of oral Tradition, (which depends upon the certainty of mens senses, and an assurance of the ability and integrity of those who were dead 1500 years before we were born) are glad to take refuge in Principles quite contrary; such as these, That we can have no assurance, but that whole Professions of men * *might hap to be Knaves*; * P. 16. that we can have no sufficient evidence that any man made his *Copy perfectly like the former*, unless * *we stood at his elbow, attentively watching him*: Nay, * P. 16. and if we did so, we have still reason to distrust our senses. In short, all human Faith supposeth honesty among men; and that for matters of Fact, and plain objects of Sense, the general and uncontrôll'd testimony of mankind is to be credited; and for matters of peculiar skill and knowledg, that the generality of those who are accounted skilful in that kind, are to be relied upon: For, as *Aristotle* well observes, there is no

Preface.

* Answ. to
the Lord
Falkland.
P. 33.

greater sign of an *undisciplin'd wit* (or, to use one of Mr. *S's*. fine phrases *, of a man *not acquainted with the paths of Science*) than to expect greater evidence for things than they are capable of. Every man hath reason to be assured of a thing which is capable of sufficient evidence, when he hath as much evidence for it as the nature of that thing will bear, and as the capacity he is in will permit him to have. And, as Mr. *White* says well * *Satisfaction is to be given to every one according to his capacity; it is sufficient for a Child to believe his Parents; for a Clown to believe his Preacher.* And this is universally true in all cases, where we have not better or equal evidence to the contrary. But such is the unhappiness of the Popish Doctrines, that if people were permitted the free use of the Scripture, they would easily discern them to have no probable foundation in it, and some of them to be plainly contrary to it; so that it cannot be safe for their Preachers to tell the people that the Scripture is the only *Rule of Faith*, lest they should find cause not to believe them, when they teach Doctrines so plainly contrary to that Rule.

§ 8. Last-

§ 8. *Lastly*, He says *, the Protestants * P. 17. cannot be *certain of the true sense of Scripture*. Does he mean of plain Texts, or obscure ones? Of the true sense of plain Texts, I hope every one may be certain; and for obscure ones, it is not necessary every one should. But it may be there are no plain Texts in the Scriptures; then the reason of it must be (till Mr. S. can shew a better) either because it is impossible for any one to write plainly; or because God cannot write so plainly as men; or because we have good reason to think that he would not write things necessary for every one to believe, so as men might clearly understand him.

But he tells us *, *The numerous Com-* * P. 17. *ments upon Scripture* are an evidence that no man can be certain of the true sense of it. I hope not; for if those numerous Commentators do generally agree in the sense of *plain* Texts (as 'tis certain they do) then this Argument signifies nothing as to such Texts: And as for those which are *obscure*, let Commentators differ about them as much as they please, so long as all necessary

* P. 17.

Points of Faith and matters of Practice are delivered in plain Texts. He adds *, *There are infinite disputes about the sense of Scripture, even in most concerning Points, as in that of Christ's Divinity.* But are not Commentators, both Protestant and Popish, generally agreed about the sense of Scripture in that Point? And what if some out of prejudice do mistake, or out of perverseness do wrest the plainest Texts of Scripture for the Divinity of Christ, to another sense? Is this any argument that those Texts are not sufficiently plain? Can any thing be spoken or written in words so clear from ambiguity, which a perverse or prejudiced mind shall not be able to vex and force to another meaning. God did not write the Scriptures for the froward and the captious, but for those who will read them with a free and unprejudiced mind, and are willing to come to the knowledg of the Truth. If Mr. S. had been conversant in the writings of the Fathers, he could not but have taken notice with what confidence they attempt to prove the Divinity of Christ out of Scripture, as if that did afford convincing arguments for this purpose.

St.

St. *Chrysostom* * professes to demonstrate out of Scripture, *That the Son is of the same substance with the Father*; and relies upon Scripture alone for this, without mentioning any other kind of Argument. So that it seems, St. *Chrysostom* was not acquainted with the insufficiency of Scripture for the conviction of Hereticks in this Point; and that he was either ignorant of the (*infallible*) way of Demonstrating this point from Oral Tradition, or had no great opinion of it. The same *Father* elsewhere *, arguing against Hereticks about the Divinity of Christ, says, *That they pervert the Scriptures, to strengthen their Heresie from thence*. But then he does not (with Mr. S.) blame the Scripture, and say that this Doctrine is not there deliver'd with sufficient clearness; but contrarywise he says, *That the Scripture is clear enough, but the corrupt minds of Hereticks will not see what is there contain'd*. Had St. *Chrysostom* been a true Son of the *Traditionary Church*, he would have lain hold of this occasion, to vilifie the Scriptures, and to shew the necessity of regulating our Faith not by such uncertain

* Hom. 32
de Confub
stant.

* Hom. 7
de Sancte
Phosa.

* P. 17.

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* Hom. 32
de Consu-
stant.

* Hom. 7
de Sancte
Phosa.

tain *Records*, but by the infallible *Reports* of Oral Tradition.

§ 9. But because Mr. S. lays great weight (in several parts of his Book) upon this Exception against Scripture, *viz. That Protestants cannot be certain of the true sense of it* : Therefore I shall not content myself, only to have shewn that we may be sufficiently certain of the sense of Scripture, so far as to understand all necessary matters of Faith and Practice, and that more than this is not necessary ; but shall likewise return this Exception upon him by enquiring into these two things.

1. How the Traditionary Church can be more certain of the true sense of Scripture, than the Protestants ?

2. How they can be more certain of the true sense of Tradition, than Protestants of the true sense of Scripture ?

1. How the *Traditionary Church* can be more certain of the true sense of Scripture, than *Protestants* ? They pretend to have an Oral Tradition of the true sense of it, delivered down from Father to Son. But this only reacheth to those Texts, which are coincident with the main body of Christian Doctrine ;

ctrine; as for all other parts of Scripture, they are as useless to Papists, as they suppose they are to us; because wanting the help of Oral Tradition, they cannot be certain of one tittle of them. And as for those Texts, the sense whereof is conveyed down by Oral Tradition; this sense is, I hope, delivered in some words or other; And have all Preachers, and Fathers, and Mothers, and Nurses, the faculty of delivering this sense in words so plain as cannot possibly be mistaken or wrested to another sense? I am sorry that when every one hath this faculty of speaking their thoughts plainly, the Holy Ghost should be represented as not able to convey his mind to men in intelligible words. And does not his own Objection rebound upon himself? If the Church have a certain sense of Scripture orally delivered, whence are the numerous Comments of the Fathers upon it and of later Writers in their Church, and the infinite Disputes about the sense of it, in the most concerning Points? *viz.*
The efficacy of Gods grace, the Supremacy of St. Peter. the infallibility of a Pope and Council by immediate assistance of
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the Holy Ghost? What a stir is made about the sense of *Dabo tibi Claves, Tu es Petrus, & super hanc Petram, &c. Pasce oves?* Do not they differ about the meaning of these Texts among themselves, as much as they do from the Fathers, and from the Protestants? Some understanding them of St *Peters* Supremacy only; others of his infallibility; others of his infallibility only in and with a general Council; which yet others do not allow to Pope or Council, from any immediate assistance, but only from the rational force of Tradition, supposing that the Pope and Council hold to it. If oral Tradition have brought down a certain sense of these Texts, why do they not produce it, and agree in it? If it have not (to use a hot phrase of his own *) 'tis perfect phrenzy to say they can be certain of the true sense of Scripture.

*P. 17.

If he say, they are by Tradition made certain of the true sense of Scripture, so far as it concerns the main body of Christian Doctrine, and do all agree in it, and that is sufficient; then I ask him, What are those points of Faith which make up the body of Christian Do-

Doctrine? He will tell me, they are those which all Catholicks agree to have descended to them from the Apostles by a constant and uninterrupted Tradition. I enquire farther, how I shall know what is the certain sense of Scripture so far as it concerns these points? He must answer as before, that *that* is the true sense which all Catholicks agree to have descended to them by Tradition. Which amounts to this, that *all* Catholicks do agree in the sense of Scripture so far as they do *all* agree in it. It is to be hoped, that the Protestants (how much soever at present they differ about the sense of Scripture) may in time come to as good an agreement as this. This brings to my remembrance a passage or two of Mr. Cressy; the one in his *Appendix* *, where he tells us, *That as it is impossible that Hereticks should agree any other way than in Faction; so it is impossible that Catholicks should differ in points of Faith.* Why so? Were not those Catholicks first, who afterwards became Hereticks; and when they became so, did they not differ in points of Belief? Yes; but here lies the conceit, when they began to differ,

* Exomolog. 2d. Edit. P. 554.

* Exomolog. c. 53.
Sect. 2.

differ, then they ceas'd to be Catholicks; therefore Catholicks can never differ in points of Faith. The other passage is where he says *, That he *bath forsaken a Church where Unity was impossible, &c. and betaken himself to a Church where Schism is impossible.* This last Clause, *That Schism is impossible in their Church,* cannot possibly be true but in the same absurd and ludicrous sense, in which it is impossible for Catholicks to differ in points of Belief. For he cannot deny, but that it is possible for men to break off from the Communion of their Church, which in his sense is Schism; but here is the subtilty of it, No Schismatick is of their Church, because so soon as he is a Schismatick he is out of it; therefore Schism is impossible in their Church. And is it not as impossible in the Church of *England*? Where Mr. *Cr.* might have done well to have continued, till he could have given a better reason of forsaking Her.

* Dial. 2.
Sect. 12.

§ 10. But to return to our purpose. Mr. *Rusworth* * acknowledgeth, that the Scripture is of it self sufficiently plain, as to matters of practice; for he asks,

asks, *Who is so blind, as not to see that these things are to be found in Scripture by a sensible, common, and discreet reading of it; though perhaps by a rigorous and exact balancing of every particular word and syllable, any of these things would vanish away we know not how?* So that for the direction of our lives and actions, *he* confesseth the Scripture to be sufficiently plain, if men will but read it *sensibly* and *discreetly*; and (*he* sayes) that he is blind that does not see this. But who so blind as he that *will* not see, that the sense of Scripture is as plain in all necessary points of Faith? I am sure St. *Austin* makes no difference, when he tells us *, That *in those things which are plainly set down in Scripture, we may find all those things in which Faith and Manners of life are comprehended.* And why cannot men, in reference to matters of Faith as well as of Practice, read the Scriptures *sensibly* and *discreetly* without such a *rigorous balancing of every word and syllable* as will make the sense *vanish away we know not how?* If the Scripture be but sufficiently plain to such as will use it *sensibly* and *discreetly*, I do not

* De Doctr. Christ. L. 2.

not understand what greater plainness can be desir'd in a Rule: Nor can I imagine what kind of Rule it must be that can be unexceptionably plain to captious Cavillers, and such as are bent to play the fool with it.

Well, suppose the Scripture be not sufficiently clear as to matters of Faith; and hereupon I have recourse to the Church for the true sense of Scripture: Must I believe the Churches sense to be the true sense of such a Text, though I see it to be plainly contrary to the genuine sense of the words; yes, that I must, or else I make my self and not the Church judg of the sense of Scripture, which is the grand Heresie of the Protestants. But then I must not suppose, much less believe, that the Churches sense of such a Text is contrary to the genuine meaning of it; no, although I plainly see it to be so: This is hard again on the other hand; especially if that be true which is acknowledged both by Dr. *Holden*, and Mr. *Cressy*, viz. That though general Councils cannot mistake in the Points of Faith which they decree, yet they may mistake in the confirmation of them from Texts of Scrip-

Scripture, that is, they may be mistaken about the sense of those Texts. And if Mr. S. think his Brethren have granted too much, he may see this exemplified in the second Council of *Nice* (to mention no other) which to establish their Doctrine of Image-worship, does so palpably abuse and wrest Texts of Scripture, that I can hardly believe that any Papist in the World hath the forehead to own that for the true sense of those Texts which is there given by those Fathers.

§ II. *Secondly*, How the Traditionary Church can be more certain of the true sense of their Traditional Doctrines, than the Protestants can be of the true sense of Scripture? And this is worthy our enquiry, because if the business be search'd to the bottom, it will appear (besides all other inconveniences, which oral Tradition is much more liable to than Scripture) that the certain sense and meaning of Traditional Doctrine is as hard to come at as the sense of Scripture. And this I will make appear by necessary consequence from their own Concessions. Mr. *White*, and Mr. *S.* say
that

* Dial. 2.
Sect. 6.

* Analys.
Fidei. L. 1.
c. 9.

that the great security of Tradition is this, that it is not tied to certain phrases, and set-forms of expression, but the same sense is conveyed and settled in mens hearts by various expressions. But according to Mr. *Rushworth*, this renders Tradition's sense uncertain; for *he* says *, *'Tis impossible to put fully, and beyond all quarrel, the same sense in divers words.* So that if men do not receive Tradition in a *sensible, common, discreet* way (as Mr. *Rushw.* speaks concerning reading the Scriptures) but will come to a *rigorous and exact balancing of every particular phrase, word, and syllable*, the sense of Tradition will be in the very same danger of uncertainty, and be liable to *vanish we know not how.* Dr. *Holden* * lays down these two Principles. First, *That no truth can be conveyed down from man to man but by speech; and speech cannot be but by words; and all words are either equivocal in themselves, or liable to be differently understood by several persons.* Secondly, *That such is the frame of mans mind, that the same truths may be differently apprehended and understood by different persons.* And if this be true,

true, then Traditional Doctrines, if they be deliverd by speech and words, will be liable to uncertainties and ambiguities as to their sense, as well as Scripture.

Mr. Cressy * tells us, *That Reason and* * Append.
Experience shews, that differences will c. 6.

arise even about the Writings of the Fathers, and any thing but the Testimony of the present Church. If this be true,

Tradition wholly falls into uncertainty. For if difference will arise about *the Writings of the Fathers* how they are to be interpreted, I suppose the Writings of Councils will be liable to the same inconvenience: And if the whole present Church cannot declare her sense of any Traditional Doctrine otherwise than by a Council, (unless with the Jesuites they will epitomize the Church into the Pope), and the Decrees of a Council cannot be universally dispers'd (or at least never use to be) but by Writing: And if Differences will arise about the interpretation of *that Writing*, as well as any other; then this *present infallible Authority* (which Mr. Cressy magnifies so much for ending Differences) leaves all Controversies arising

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sing about the sense of Tradition, as indeterminable as ever; and they must for ever remain so, till general Councils have got the knack of penning their Decrees in words which will so infallibly express their meaning to the most captious Caviller, that no difference can possibly arise about the interpretation of them; or else (which will be more suitable to this wise *Hypothesis*) till general Councils (being convinc'd by Mr. S's *Demonstrations*) shall come to understand themselves so well, as not to entrust their Decrees any more to the *uncertain* way of *Writing*, but for the future to communicate them to the World by the *infallible* way of *oral Tradition*. And to mention no more, Mr *Knott* *, (who agrees with the other thus far, that the certain sense of Scripture is only to be had from the Church) speaks to this purpose, That before we can be certain that this is the sense of such a Text, we must either be certain that this Text is capable of no other sense, as *Figurative*, *Mystical*, or *Moral*; or if it be, we must have *some certain and infallible means to know in which of them it is taken,*
which

* Answ. to
 Chilling.
 c.2. Sect. 6.

Sect. 3. of FAITH.

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which can be known only by revelation.

If this be true, then by a fair parity of reason, before I can be certain that this is the sense of a Doctrinal Tradition delivered down to me, I must either be certain that the words, in which this Tradition was expressed when it was delivered to me, are capable of no other sense (as Figurative, Mystical, or Moral) besides that in which I understood them; or if they be (as certainly they will be) capable of any of these other senses, then must I have some certain and infallible means whereby to know in which of these they are taken: And this can no more be known without a revelation, than which is the true sense of such a Text of Scripture. If it be said, that the sense of a Traditional Doctrine may by different expressions be still further and further explained to me till I come certainly to understand the sense of it; this will not help the matter: For if these kind of cavils be good, that a man cannot be certain of the meaning of any words, till he can by an infallible argument demonstrate either that they cannot be taken, or that they

are not taken in any other sense ; I say, if this cavil will hold, then every new expression whereby any one shall endeavor to explain any Traditional Doctrine, is liable to the same inconvenience which those words in which it was first delivered to me were liable to. From all which it is evident, that the Traditionary Church can be no more certain of the sense of their Traditional Doctrines, than Protestants may be of the sense of Scripture.

§ 12. These are his Exceptions contained in his second *Discourse*; and of what force they are, hath been examined. But because he foresaw that it might be replied that these defects might in part be provided against by *History*, by the *Providence of God*, by *Testimonies of Councils and Fathers*, and by the *sufficient clearness of Scripture as to Fundamentals*; He endeavors to shew that these signifie little to this purpose.

* P. 17, 18. *First, Not History* *; because few are skilled in *History*, and they that are not, cannot safely rely upon those that are skill'd, unless they knew certainly that
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the Historians whom they rely on had secure grounds, and not bare hear-say for what they writ, and that they were not contradicted by others either extant, or perished. How much credit is to be given to uncontrolled History by the learned, and how much by the vulgar to men of skill, I have already shewn. I shall only add now, that if this reasoning be true, it is impossible for any man to be certain by History of any ancient matter of Fact, as *namely* that there were such persons as *Julius Caesar*, and *William the Conqueror*, and that they invaded and conquered *England*, because (according to him) we cannot know certainly that the Historians, who relate these things, and upon whose authority we rely, *had secure grounds, and not bare hear-say for what they writ : And that they were not contradicted by others either extant or perished*, is, I am sure, impossible for any man to know : For who can tell now what was contained in those Books which are perished ? So that if this be requisite, to make every Historical Relation credible, to know certainly that it was not contra-

dicted by any of those Books which we do not know what they were, nor what was in them, we can have no certainty of any ancient Fact or History; for who knows certainly that some Books that are perished did not contradict whatever is written in Books that are extant? Nay, if this reasoning hold, we can have no certainty of any thing conveyed by oral Tradition. For what though the Priest tell me this was the Doctrine of Christ delivered to him? unless I know that all others agree with him in this Tradition, I cannot rely upon his testimony: Nor then neither in Mr. Knott's * opinion, because *the testimony of Preachers or Pastors is human and fallible*; unless (according to his Jargon) a *conclusion*, deduced from *Premises*, one of which is only *probable*, may be *sufficient to bring our understanding to an infallible act of Faith*, viz. *if such a conclusion be taken Specificative*; whereas, if it be taken *Reduplicative*, as it is a *conclusion*, it can only beget a *probable assent*; which is to say, that considered barely as a *conclusion*, and so far as in reason it can deserve

* Answ. to
Chilling.
c. 1. Sect.
33.

serve assent, it is only probable; but considered as it serves an *Hypothesis*, and is convenient to be believed with reason or without, so it is infallible. But to carry the supposition further, put the case, that the whole present Age assembled in a general Council, should declare that such a Point was delivered to them: yet (according to Mr. S.) we cannot safely rely upon this, unless we knew certainly, that those whom they relied on *had secure grounds, and not bare hear-say for what they delivered, and that they were not contradicted* within the space of 1500 years *by any of those that are dead*; which it is impossible for any one now to know.

But to shew how inconsistent he is with himself in these matters, I will present the Reader with a *passage* or *two* in another part of his Book; where he endeavors to prove that men may safely rely on a general and uncontrolled Tradition. He tells us *, *That the com-* * P. 49.
mon course of human Conversation makes it a madness not to believe great multitudes of knowers, if no possible considerations can awaken in our

* Ibid.

*reason a doubt that they conspire to deceive us. And a little after *, Nor can any, unless their brains rove wildly, or be unsettled even to the degree of madness, suspect deceit where such multitudes agree unanimously in a matter of Fact.* Now if men be but supposed to write, as well as to speak, what they know, and to agree in their Writings about matter of Fact; then it will be the same madness not to believe multitudes of Historians, where no possible consideration can awaken in our reason a doubt that they have conspired to deceive us; and mens brains must rove wildly and be unsettled even to the degree of phrenzy, who suspect deceit where such multitudes unanimously agree in a matter of Fact. And this seems to me to be the great unhappiness of Mr. S's Demonstrations, that they proceed upon contradictory Principles; so that in order to the demonstrating of the uncertainty of Books and Writings, he must suppose all those Principles to be uncertain, which he takes to be self-evident and unquestionable when he is to demonstrate the Infallibility of Oral Tradition.

§. 13. *Secondly*, He tells us *, the *Pro-* * P. 18.
vidence of God is no security against those contingencies the Scriptures are subject to; because we cannot be certain of the Divine Providence or assistance to his Church, *but by the Letter of Scripture*; therefore that must first be proved *certain, before we mention the Church, or Gods assistance to her.* As if we pretended there were any promise in Scripture that God would preserve the Letter of it entire and uncorrupted, or as if we could not otherwise be assured of it; as if the light of natural Reason could not assure us of Gods Providence in general, and of his more especial care of those things which are of greatest concernment to us, such as this is, That a Book containing the method and the terms of Salvation should be preserved from any material corruption. He might as well have said, That without the Letter of Scripture we cannot know that there is a God,

§. 14. *Thirdly*, Nor (says he*) can * P. 18, 19.
Testimonies of *Councils and Fathers* be sufficient Interpreters of Scripture. We
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do not say they are. Our Principle is, That the Scripture doth sufficiently interpret it self, that is, is plain to all capacities, in things necessary to be believed and practised. And the general consent of Fathers in this doctrine of the sufficient plainness of Scripture (which I shall afterwards shew) is a good evidence against them. As for obscure and more doubtful Texts, we acknowledge the Comments of the *Fathers* to be a good help, but no certain Rule of interpretation. And that the Papists think so, as well as we, is plain; inasmuch as they acknowledge the Fathers to differ among themselves in the interpretation of several Texts : And nothing is more familiar in all Popish Commentators, than to differ from the ancient Fathers about the sense of Scripture. And as for *Councils*. Dr. *Holden*, and Mr. *Cressy* (as I said before) do not think it necessary to beleive that alwayes to be the true sense of Texts which Councils give of them, when they bring them to confirm Points of Faith. Nay, if any Controversie arise about the sense of any Text of Scripture, it is impossible
(accor-

(according to Mr. *Rushworth's* Principles) for a Council to decide either that, or any other Controversie : for he * makes it his business to prove, That Controversies cannot be *decided by words* ; and if this be so, then they cannot be decided at all, unless he can prove that they may be decided *without words*, and consequently that Councils may do their work best in the *Quakers* way, by *silent Meetings*.

* Dial. 2.
Sect. 8.

§. 15. *Fourthly*, Nor can (says he *) * P. 20, 21. the *clearness of Scripture as to Fundamentals*, be any help against these defects. Why not ?

First, Because a certain Catalogue of *Fundamentals* was never given and agreed to by sufficient Authority, and yet without this all goes to wrack. I hope not, so long as we are sure that God would make nothing necessary to be believed but what he hath made plain ; and so long as men do believe all things that are plainly revealed (which is every ones fault if he do not) men may do well enough without a precise Catalogue. But suppose we say, That the
Articles

*Præfat.

Articles of the Apostles Creed contain all necessary matters of simple belief, what hath Mr. S. to say against this? I am sure the *Roman Catechism*, set forth by the Decree of the *Council of Trent*, says * as much as this comes to, *viz. That the Apostles having received a command to preach the Gospel to every creature, thought fit to compose a form of Christian Faith, namely to this end, that they might all think and speak the same things, and that there might be no Schisms among those whom they had called to the unity of Faith, but that they might all be perfect in the same sense, and the same opinion: And this Profession of the Christian Faith and Hope, so fram'd by them, the Apostles called the Symbole or Creed.* Now how this end, of bringing men to unity of Faith, and making them perfectly of the same sense and opinion, could probably be attained by means of the Creed, if it did not contain all necessary Points of simple belief; I can by no means understand. Besides, a certain catalogue of Fundamentals is as necessary for them as for us; and when Mr. S. gives
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in his, ours is ready. Mr. *Chillingworth* had a great desire to have seen Mr. *Knott's* catalogue of Fundamentals, and challenged him to produce it, and offered him very fairly, that when ever he might with one hand receive his, he would with the other deliver his own: But Mr. *Knott*, though he still persisted in the same demand, could never be prevailed with to bring forth his own, but kept it for a secret to his dyingday. But to put a final stop to this *Canting demand* of a *Catalogue of Fundamentals* (which yet I perceive I shall never be able to do, because it is one of those expletive Topicks which Popish Writers, especially those of the lowest Form, do generally make use of to help out a Book) however to do what I can towards the stopping of it, I desire Mr. *S.* to answer the reasons whereby his Friend Dr. *Holden* * shews the unreasonableness of * *Analyf.* this demand, and likewise endeavours *Fid. L. I.* to prove that such a *Catalogue* would not *C. 4.* only be *useless* and *pernicious* if it could be given, but that it is *manifestly impossible* to give such a precise Catalogue.

Secondly, He asks *, *Is it a Funda- * P. 21.*
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*mental that Christ is God? If so, Whether this be clearer in Scripture, than that God hath hands, feet, &c? To which I answer by another question; Is it clear that there are Figures in Scripture, and that many things are spoken after the manner of men, and by way of condescension and accomodation to our capacities; and that custom and common sense teacheth men to distinguish between things figuratively and properly spoken? If so, why cannot every one easily understand, that when the Scripture saith God hath hands and feet, and that Christ is the Vine and the Door, these are not to be taken properly, as we take this Proposition, that Christ is God, in which no man hath any reason to suspect a Figure? When Mr. S. tells us, That he percheth upon the specifical nature of things, would it not offend him, if any one should be so silly as to conclude from hence that Mr. S. believed himself to be a Bird, and nature a Perch? And yet not only the Scriptures, but all sober Writers are free from such forc't and phantastical Metaphors. I remember that Origen * taxeth Celsus his wilful Ignorance*

Ignorance in finding 'fault with the
'Scriptures, for attributing to God hu-
'mane affections, as anger, &c. and tells
'him, that any one who had a mind to
'understand the Scriptures, might easily
'see, that such expressions were ac-
'comodated to *us*, and accordingly to
'be understood ; and that no man, that
'will but compare these expressions with
'other passages of Scripture, need to fail
'of the true sense of them. But (ac-
cording to Mr. S.) *Origen* was to blame
to find fault with *Celsus* for thinking
that the Scripture did really attribute
humane affections to God ; for how could
he think otherwise, when *the most funda-*
mental Point is not clearer in Scripture,
than that God hath hands, feet, &c ?
How could *Origen* in reason expect
from *Celsus* (though never so great a
Philosopher) that he should be able
without the help of Oral Tradition, to
distinguish between what is spoken *lite-*
rally, and what by a certain *Scheme* of
speech ? *Theodoret* * tells us of one *Au-* * *Hæret.*
dens, who held that God had a hu- *Fabul. l. 4.*
mane shape, and bodily members ; but *he*
does not say that the reason of this Er-
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ror was, because he made Scripture the Rule of his Faith, but expressly because *he was a fool, and did foolishly understand those things which the Divine Scriptures speak by way of Condescension.* So that although Mr. S. is pleas'd to make this wise Objection, yet it seems, (according to *Theodoret*) that men do not mistake such Texts, either for want of oral Tradition, or of sufficient clearness in the Scriptures, but for want of common reason and sense. And if Mr. S. know of any Rule of Faith that is secure from all possibility of being mistaken by foolish and perverse men, I would be glad to be acquainted with it.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

§. 1. **I**N his next Discourse he endeavours to shew, that unlearned Persons cannot be justified as acting rationally in receiving the Scripture for the Word of God, and relying upon it as a certain Rule; because they are not capable of satisfaction concerning these matters. But I have already shewn that they are, and shall not repeat the same over again. And whereas he says *, That *several Professions all pretend to Scripture, and yet differ, and damn, and persecute one another* about these differences; the answer is easie: That they all pretend to Scripture, is an argument that they all acknowledg it to be the Word of God, and the *Rule of Faith*; and that they are generally agreed about the sense of those plain Texts which contain the fundamental Points of Faith is evident, in that those several Professions acknowledg the Articles contained in the Apostles Creed to be sufficiently delivered in Scripture: And if any Professions differ about the meaning of plain Texts, that is not an argument that

That Scripture is a sufficient Rule to the Unlearned, and to the most Rational doubters.

* P. 245

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plain Texts are obscure, but that some men are perverse. And if those Professions damn and persecute one another, about the meaning of obscure Texts, the Scripture is not in fault, but those that do so.

* P. 25, 26, 27.

§. 2. And whereas he pretends*, That the Scripture is not able to satisfy Sceptical dissenters, and Rational doubters, because nothing under a demonstration can satisfy such persons so well concerning the incorruptedness of Originals, the faithfulness of Translations, &c. but that searching and sincere Wits may still maintain their ground of suspence with A Might it not be otherwise? This hath been answered already: partly, by shewing that the Scripture was not intended to satisfy Scepticks, and that a Demonstration is not sufficient to give satisfaction to them; and partly, by shewing that Rational doubters may have as much satisfaction concerning those matters, as the nature of the things will bear; and he is not a Rational doubter that desires more.

But that he may see the unreasonableness of this Discourse, I shall briefly shew him, That all Mankind do in matters

ters of this nature accept of such evidence as falls short of Demonstration; and that his great *Friends* and *Masters* from whom he hath taken the main grounds of his Book (though he manageth them to less advantage) do frequently acknowledg, that it is reasonable for men to acquiesce in such assurance as falls short of Infallibility, and such evidence as is less than Demonstration. Do not mankind think themselves sufficiently assured of the Antiquity and Authors of several Books, for which they have not Demonstrative evidence? Doth not *Aristotle* say, that things of a moral and civil nature, and matters of Fact done long ago, are incapable of Demonstration; and that it is madness to expect it for things of this Nature? Are there no passages in Books so plain, that a man may be sufficiently satisfied that this and no other is the certain sense of them? If there be none, can any thing be *spoken* in plainer words than it may be *written*? If it cannot, how can we be satisfied of the certain sense of any Doctrine Orally delivered? And if we cannot be so satisfi'd, where's the certainty of Oral

Tradition? But if Books may be written so plainly, as that we may be abundantly satisfied that this is the certain sense of such and such passages; then we may reasonably rest satisfied in evidence for these matters short of Demonstration. For was ever the sense of any words so plain as that there did not remain *this ground of suspense*, that those words might be capable of another sense. Mr. *Rushworth** says, That *disputative Scholars do find means daily to explicate the plainest words of an Author to a quite different sense*: And that the World might be furnish't with an advantageous instance of the possibility of this, *Raynaudus** (a Writer of their own) hath made a wanton experiment upon the Apostles Creed, and by a sinister (but possible) interpretation, hath made every Article of it Heresie and Blasphemy, on purpose to shew that the plainest words are not free from ambiguity. But may be Mr. *S.* can out-do the Apostles, and can deliver the Christian Doctrine so clearly, that he can demonstrate it impossible for any man to put any other sense upon any of his words than that which he intended.

* Dial. 2.
Sect. 7.

* De bonis &
malis Libris.

ded. I do not know what may be done, but if Mr. S. doth this, he must both mend his style, and his way of Demonstration.

Is Mr. S. sufficiently assured that there is such a part of the World as *America*? and can he demonstrate this to any man, without carrying him thither? Can he shew by any necessary Argument, that it is naturally impossible that all the Relations concerning that place should be false? When his Demonstrations have done their utmost, cannot * *a searching and sincere Wit at least maintain his ground of suspence with A Might it not be otherwise?* and with an, Is it not possible that all men may be Lyars, or that a company of Travellers may have made use of their Priviledg to abuse the World by false Reports, and to put a Trick upon Mankind? or that all those that pretend to go thither, and bring their Commodities from thence, may go to some other Parts of the World, and taking pleasure in abusing others, in the same manner as they have been imposed upon themselves, may say they have been at *America*? Who can tell but all this may be so? and yet

* P. 27.

I suppose, notwithstanding the possibility of this, no man in his Wits is now possessed with so incredible a folly as to doubt whether there be such a place. The case is the very same as to the certainty of an ancient Book and of the sense of plain expressions : We have no demonstration for these things, and we expect none ; because we know the things are not capable of it. We are not infallibly certain, that any Book is so ancient as it pretends to be, or that it was written by him whose name it bears , or that this is the sense of such and such passages in it, it is possible all this may be otherwise ; ~~that is~~, it implies no contradiction : But we are very well assured that it is not ; nor hath any prudent man any just cause to make the least doubt of it. For a bare possibility that a thing may be, or not be, is no just cause of doubting whether a thing be or not. It is possible all the people in *France* may dye this night, but I hope the possibility of this doth not eclipse any man in the least to think it will be so. It is possible the Sun may not rise to morrow morning, and yet for all this I suppose that no man hath the least doubt but that it will.

§. 3. But because this *Principle*, viz. *That in matters of Religion a man cannot be reasonably satisfy'd with anything less than that infallible assurance which is wrought by Demonstration*, is the main Pillar of Mr. S's Book; therefore, beside what hath been already said to shew the unreasonableness of this Principle, I shall take a little pains to manifest to him how much he is contradicted in this by the chief of *his Brethren of the Tradition*, viz. Mr. *Rushworth*, Dr. *Holden*, Mr. *Cressy*, and Mr. *White*, who besides Mr. S. and one *I. B.* are (so far as I can learn) all the publick Patrons that ever this *Hypothesis* of Oral Tradition hath had in the World; and if Mr. *White* (as I have reason to believe) was the Authour of those *Dialogues* which pass under *Rushworth's* name, the number of them is yet less. Now if I can shew that this *Principle* (esteem'd by Mr. S. so fundamental to this *Hypothesis*) is plainly contradicted by the principal *Affertors* of Oral Tradstion, I shall hereby gain one of these two things; either that these great Patrons of Oral Tradition were ignorant of the true foundation of their own Hy-

thesis, or that this *Principle* is not necessary for the support of it. Not that I would be so understood as if I did deny that these very *Persons* do sometimes speak very big words of the necessity of *Infallibility* : But if it be their pleasure to contradict themselves, as I have no reason to be displeased, so neither to be concerned for it; but shall leave it to Mr. S. to reconcile *them* first to *themselves*, and then (if he pleases) afterwards to *himself*.

§. 4. I begin with Mr. *Rushworth* of immortal memory, for that noble attempt of his to persuade the World that notwithstanding he was the first Inventer of this *Hypothesis* of Oral Tradition, yet he could prove that the Church had in all Ages owned it, and proceeded upon it as her only *Rule of Faith*. He in his *third Dialogue* *, when his Nephew objects to him, That perhaps a Protestant would say that all his foregoing Discourse was but probability and and likelihood, and therefore to hazard a mans Estate upon Peradventures, were something hard, and not very rationally done. Replies thus to him, What security do your Merchants, your States-men, your

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Souldiers, those that go to Law, nay, even those that Till your grounds and work for their livings, what security, I say, do all these go upon? Is it greater than the security which these grounds afford? surely no. And yet no man esteems them foolish. All humane Affairs are hazardous, and have some adventure in them. And therefore who requires evident certainty only in matters of Religion, discovers in himself a less mind to the Goods promised in the next life, than to these which he seeks here in this World upon weaker assurance. Howsoever, the greatest evidence that can be to him that is not capable of convincing Demonstrations (which the greatest part of Mankind fall short of) is but conjectural. So that (according to Mr. Rushworth) it is not reason and discretion, but want of love to God and Religion, which makes men require greater evidence for matters of Religion, than for Humane Affairs, which yet (he tells us) are hazardous, and have some adventure in them, and consequently are not capable of Demonstration. Besides, if demonstrative evidence be an essential Property of the Rule of Faith (as Mr.

Mr. S. affirms) then this Rule cannot (according to Mr. Rushworth) be of any use to the greatest part of Mankind, because they are not capable of convincing Demonstrations. Again, Do but
 * Ibid. Sect. 6. consider (says he*) how unequal and unjust a condition it is, that the claim of the present Church shall not be heard, unless she can confute all the Peradventures that Wit may invent, and solve all the Arguments which the infinite variety of time, place, and occasions may have given way unto; and then you will see how unreasonable an Adversary he is, who will not be content with any satisfaction, but such as mans nature scarcely affords. And is it not equally unjust in Mr. S. not to let Scripture's claim be heard, unless we can confute every Peradventure [and might it not be otherwise] that Wit may invent? See then how unreasonable an Adversary Mr. S. is, who will not be content with any satisfaction, but such as (according to Mr. Rushworth) mans nature scarcely affords.

Dr. Holden (I confess) states the matter somewhat cautiously, when he tells us*, That it shall suffice for present
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to determine, that the Wisdom of the Creator hath afforded us such an assurance, especially of Truths necessary to Salvation, as is suitable to our nature, and best fitted for the safe conduct of our lives in Moral and Religious Affairs: But if we interpret these general expressions by the passages I before cited out of Mr. Rushworth (as in reason we may, since the Doctor is beholding to him for the best part of his Book) then nothing can make more against Mr. S's Principle.

§. 5. Mr. Cressy in his *Exomologesis* * * C. 19. Sect. 5. says, That such Teachers, as approached nearest to the fountain of Truth, Christ and his Apostles, had means of informing themselves in Apostolical Tradition incomparably beyond us. Mr. S. may do well to shew what those means were which are so incomparably beyond his *Infallibility* and *Demonstration*. The same Author * does very much applaud * C. 32. Sect. 4. Stapleton's determination of the question concerning the Churches *Infallibility*, which is as follows, That the Church does not expect to be taught by God immediately by new Revelations, but makes use of several means, &c. as being govern'd not by Apostles, &c. but by ordinary

nary Pastors and Teachers. That these Pastors in making use of these several means of Decision, proceed not as the Apostles did, with a peculiar infallible direction of the Holy Spirit, but with a prudential collection not always necessary. That to the Apostles who were the first Masters of Evangelical Faith, and founders of the Church, such an infallible certitude of means was necessary: not so now to the Church, &c. If this be true, That an infallible certitude of means is not now necessary to the Church, and that her Pastors do now in deciding matters of Faith proceed only with a prudent collection not always necessary; then it should seem that a searching Wit may maintain his ground of suspense, even against their Church also, with A Might it not be otherwise? Again, Mr. Cressy* tells us, That truth and our obligation to believe it, is in an higher degree in Scripture, than in the Decisions of the Church, as Bellarmine acknowledges: which is to say, that we may have greater assurance of the truth of Doctrines contained in the Scriptures, than we can have of any Doctrine from the determination of the Church.

But

* Append. c. 5.

But if we have the greatest assurance that can be of Truths deliver'd to us by the Church, as Mr. S. affirms, then I would fain learn of him what that greater degree of assurance is which Stapleton speaks of, and whether it be greater than the greatest? Not to insist upon that (which yet I cannot but by the way take notice of) that Mr. Cressy, by his approbation of this determination of Bellarmine's, doth advance the Scripture above the Church as to one of the most essential Properties of the *Rule of Faith*, viz. the certainty of it.

But the most eminent Testimony to my purpose in Mr. Cressy, is that famous passage* (which hath given so much offence to several of his own Church) wherein he acknowledges the *unfortunateness* (to him) of the word *Infalibility*, and tells us, *That he could find no such word in any Council; That no necessity appear'd to him that either he or any other Protestant should ever have heard that word nam'd, and much less press'd with so much earnestness as of late it has generally been in Disputations and Books of Controversie; and that Mr. Chillingworth combats this word with too*

* C. 40.
Sect. 3, &c.

too

to great success, insomuch that if this word were once forgotten or but laid by, Mr. Chillingworth's Arguments would lose the greatest part of their strength; and that if this word were confin'd to the Schools where it was bred, there would be still no inconvenience: And that since by manifest experience the English Protestants think themselves so secure, when they have leave to stand or fall by that word, and in very deed have so much to say for themselves when they are pressed unnecessarily with it: Since likewise it is a word capable of so high a sense that we cannot devise one more full and proper to attribute to God himself, &c. Since all this is so, he thinks he cannot be blamed, if such Reasons move him to wish that the Protestants may never be invited to combat the Authority of the Church under that Notion. A very ingenuous acknowledgment, and as cross to Mr. S's Principle as any thing can be. But the word *Infallibility* was not so unfortunate to Mr. Cressy, as is his untoward Explication of the fore-cited passage, in his *Appendix* which he afterwards published chiefly by way of Vindication of himself against the Learned
Author

Author of the Preface to my Lord Falkland's Discourse of Infallibility. There he* tells us, That there are *several degrees of Infallibility.* And that we may know what degree of Infallibility he thinks necessary to be attributed to the Church, this following passage will inform us: *Methinks* (says he) *if God have furnished his divine and supernatural Truth, with evidence equal to this, that the Sun will shine to morrow, or that there will be a Spring and Harvest next year, we are infinitely obliged to bless his Providence, and justly condemned, if we refuse to believe the least of such Truths, as shewing less affection to save our souls, than the dull Plow-men to sow their Corn, who certainly have far less evidence for their Harvest, than Catholiques for their Faith; and yet they insist not peevishly upon every capricious Objection, nor exact an infallible security of a plentiful reaping next Summer, but notwithstanding all difficulties and contingencies proceed chearfully in their painful Husbandry.* So that according to this Discourse, whatever degree of assurance the Church hath, or can give to those who rely upon her, it is plain that

* Append.
Sect. 2. & 3.



that no further degree is necessary than what the Husbandman, when he sows, hath of a plentiful Harvest; and that men are justly condemned if they refuse to believe the least truth upon such security, which yet (by his own acknowledgment) is liable to Contingencies: Nay further, that men are not reasonable, but *peevish*, in *exactting infallible security*, and *insisting upon every capricious Objection*, such as is Mr. S's *Might it not be otherwise?* Now as to this degree of Assurance, or (as he calls it) Infallibility, I cannot but grant what he says of it to be most true, *viz.* That *in a severe acception of the word* it is not *rigorously infallible*, that is (as he explains it) it is not *absolutely impossible*, nor does it *imply a flat contradiction* that the thing whereof we are so assured may be otherwise: But then I utterly deny that according to any true acception of this word, such a degree of Assurance as he speaks of can be called Infallibility; and withall I affirm, That none of those several degrees of Infallibility which he mentions, excepting that only which imports an absolute impossibility, can with any tolerable

able propriety of speech or regard to the true meaning and use of the word, have the name of Infallibility given to them. For Infallibility can signifie nothing else but an utter impossibility that one should be deceived in that matter as to which he is supposed to be infallible; and to say such a thing is impossible, is to say that the existence of it implies a flat contradiction. So that whosoever asserts degrees of Infallibility, is obliged to shew that there are degrees of absolute impossibilities, and of perfect contradictions; and he had need of a very sharp and piercing wit that is to find out degrees where there neither are nor can be any. Indeed, in respect of the objects of knowledge, it is easie to conceive how Infallibility may be extended to more objects or fewer; but in respect of the degree of assurance (of which Mr. *Cressy* speaks) it is altogether unimaginable how any one can be more or less out of *all possibility* of being deceived in those things wherein he is supposed to be infallible; for no one can be more removed from the possibility of being deceived, than he that is out of *all possibility* of being

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deceived, and whosoever is less than this, is not infallible; because he only is so, who is out of *all* possibility of being deceived in those matters wherein he is supposed to be infallible. So that Mr. *Cressy's* lower degrees of Infallibility are no degrees of that assurance which may properly be called infallible (for that can have no degrees) but of that assurance which is less than infallible. And he needed not have raised all this dust about the degrees of Infallibility, had it not been that by the means of such a cloud he might make the more convenient escape out of that strait he was in between the clamours of his own Church, and the advantage which his Adversaries made of his free and open discourse against Infallibility. For any one that carefully reads his Book, will find that he understands nothing by the Infallibility of the Church, but *an Authority of obliging all Christians to submit to her Decisions*, which is no more but what every Supreme Civil Judg hath in Civil matters, *viz.* a power to determine those Controversies that lie before him as well as he *can* or *will*, and when that is done every one is bound

bound to submit to such determinations; but yet for all this, no man ever dream't a Supreme Civil Judg to be *infallible* more than another man. I do not now dispute the extent of the Churches Authority; but if she have no other Infallibility but what a full Authority of decision does suppose, I am sure she hath none at all.

Before I leave Mr. *Cressy*, I cannot but take notice how *unfortunate* and *disingenuous* he is in explaining the meaning of these words of his own, *viz.* [*Against this word of Infallibility Mr. Chillingworth's Book especially combats, and this with too too great success*] which in his *Appendix* * he interprets thus, *Succes*, *I mean, not against the Church, but against his own Soul, and the Souls of his Fellow-English Protestants, &c.* As if one that had wished well to *Cæsar* should have said, *That Pompey had fought against him with too too great success*; and being afterwards challenged by *Cæsar's* Party, as having said that *Pompey* had Conquered *Cæsar*, he should explain himself thus, *Succes*, *I mean, not against Cæsar, but against his own life, and the lives of his followers.* Can
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* C. 5. Sect. 6.

any thing be finer than for a man to say that by *Pompey's* success in fighting against *Cæsar*, he means that *Cæsar* had beaten *Pompey*? which is no more than if one should take the liberty to interpret *white* by *black*.

§. 6. *Lastly*, Mr. *White* doth most expressly contradict this Principle of Mr. *S's* in these following passages. In his Preface to Mr. *Rushworth* he says, *That such a certainty as makes the cause always work the same effect, though it take not away the absolute possibility of working otherwise, ought absolutely to be reckoned in the degree of true certainty; and that those Authors are mistaken who undervalue it.* So that it seems Mr. *S.* is mistaken in affirming that a man cannot be certain of any thing so long as there is any possibility that it may be otherwise. In his Answer to my Lord *Falkland*, he says*, *That in Moral matters, and such as are subject to humane action, we must expect such assurance as humane actions bear. If for the government of your spiritual life you have as much as for the management of your natural and civil life, what can you expect more? Two or three wit-*

* P. 14, 15.

witnesses of men beyond exception will cast a man out of not only his lands, but life and all. He that among Merchants will not adventure, where there is a Hundred to one of gaining, will be accounted a silly Factor. And among Souldiers, he that will fear danger where but one of a Hundred is slain, shall not escape the stain of Cowardize. What then shall we expect in Religion, but to see a main advantage on the one side which we may rest our selves on? and for the rest, remember we are men subject to chance and mutability, and thank God he hath given us that assurance in a supernatural way, which we are contented withall in our civil ventures and possessions, which nevertheless God knoweth we often love better, and would hazard less than the unknown good of the life to come. Again*, If God Al- * P. 30.
mighty hath in all sorts and manners provided his Church that she may enlighten every man in his way, that goeth the way of a man, then let every man consider which is the fit way for himself, and what in other matters of that way he accounteth evidence. And if there be no interest in his Soul to

make him loth to believe, what in another matter of the like nature he doth not stick at, or heavy to practise what he sees clearly enough, I fear not his choice. Once more; directing a man in his search after rational satisfaction in matters of Religion, he hath this passage;

* P. 46.

** Besides this, he must have this care; that he seek what the nature of the subject can yield, and not as those Physicians, who when they have promised no less than Immortality, can at last only reach to some conservation of health or youth in some small degree: So I could wish the Author to well assure himself first, that there is possible an Infallibility, before he be too earnest to be contented with nothing less; for what if humane nature should not be capable of so great a good? Would he therefore think it fitting to live without any Religion, because he could not get such a one as himself desired, though with more than a mans wish? Were it not rational to see, whether among Religions some one have not such notable advantages over the rest, as in reason it might seem humane nature might be contented withall? Let him cast his account with the dearest*

dearest things he hath, his own or friends lives, his estate, his hope of posterity, and see upon what terms of advantage he is ready to venture all these; and then return to Religion, and see whether, if he do not venture his soul upon the like, it be truly reason, or some other not confessed motive, which withdraws him. For my own part, as I doubt not of an Infallibility, so I doubt not but setting that aside, there be those Excellencies found on the Catholick party, which may force a man to prefer it, and to venture all he hath upon it, before all other Religions and Sects in the World. Why then may not one who after long searching findeth no Infallibility, rest himself on the like, supposing mans nature affords no better?

Are not these fair Concessions, which the evidence and force of Truth have extorted from these Authors? So that it seems that *that* which Mr. S. calls * *a civil piece of Atheistry*, is advanced in most express words by his best Friends, and therefore I hope he will (as he threatens me) be smart with them in opposition to so damnable and fundamental an Error. And whenever he attempts this,

* Letter to his Answerer. p. 5.

I would entreat him to remember that he hath these two things to prove. *First*, That no evidence, but demonstration, can give a man sufficient assurance of any thing. *Secondly*, That a bare possibility that a thing may be otherwise, is a rational cause of doubting, and a wise ground of suspense; which when he hath proved, I shall not grudge him his Infallibility.

SECT. V.

That Scripture is sufficient to convince the most acute Adversaries: and that it is sufficiently certain.

* P. 28.

* P. 31.

§. I. **T**HE last part of this *Third Discourse* endeavours to shew that the Scripture is not convictive of the most obstinate and acute Adversaries. As for the obstinate, he knows my mind already. Let us see why the most acute Adversary may not be convinced by Scripture. Because as he objects *, *First*, We cannot be certain that this Book is Gods Word, because of the many strange Absurdities and Heresies in the open letter as it lies, as that God hath hands and feet, &c. and because of the contradictions in it: To which I have already returned an answer. *Secondly*, Because (as he saith*) we cannot

cannot be certain of the Truth of the letter in any particular Text, that it was not foisted in, or some way altered in its significativeness; and if it be a negative proposition; that the particle [not] was not inserted, if affirmative, not left out. And if we pretend to be certain of this, he demands * our demonstration * P. 31: for it. But how unreasonable this demand is, I hope I have sufficiently shewn. And to shew it yet further, I ask him, How their Church knows, that the particle [not] was not left out of any Text in which it is now found in their Copies? I know he hath a ready answer, viz. by Oral Tradition. But this (according to him *) only rea- * P. 116: ches to *Scriptures letter so far as it is coincident with the main body of Christian Doctrine*; concerning the rest of Scripture it is impossible (according to his own principles) that they should have any security that the particle [not] was not unduly inserted, or left out by the Transcribers. Nay, as to those Texts of Scripture which fall in with the main body of Christian Doctrine, I demand his demonstration that the particle [not] was not unduly inserted,
or

or left out, not only in those Texts, but also in the Oral Tradition of the Doctrines coincident with the sense of those Texts. If he say, It was impossible any Age should conspire to leave out or insert the particle [*not*] in the Oral Tradition; so say I it was that they should conspire to leave it out of the written Text: But then I differ from him thus far, That I do not think this naturally impossible, so as that it can rigorously be demonstrated, but only morally impossible, so that no body hath any reason to doubt of it; which to a prudent man is as good as a demonstration. *Pyrrho* himself never advanced any *Principle* of *Scepticism* beyond this, *viz.* That men ought to question the credit of all Books, concerning which they cannot demonstrate as to every sentence in them, that the particle [*not*] was not inserted (if it be affirmative) or left out (if it be negative). If so much be required to free a man from reasonable doubting concerning a Book, how happy are they that have attained to Infallibility? What he saith concerning the *Varie Lectiones* * of Scripture, hath already had a sufficient answer.

§. 2. In his *Fourth Discourse*, he endeavours to shew *, That the Scripture * P. 33.
is not certain in it self, and consequently *not ascertained to us*. First,
*Not certain, materially considered * as * P. 34.*
consisting of such and such Characters, because Books are liable to be burnt, torn blotted, worn out. We grant, it is not impossible but that any, or all the Books in the World may be burnt : But then we say likewise, That a Book so universally dispersed may easily be preserved ; though we have no assurance that God will preserve it, in case all men should be so foolish or so careless as to endeavour or suffer the abolition of it. But it seems the Scriptures cannot be a Rule of Faith if they be liable to any external accidents. And this (he tells us *) *Though it may seem a remote and * P. 34.*
impertinent Exception, yet to one who considers the wise dispositions of Divine Providence, it will deserve a deep consideration ; because the salvation of Mankind being the end of Gods making nature, the means to it should be more settled, strong, and unalterable, than any other piece of nature whatever. But, notwithstanding this wise reason, this
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Exception still seems to me both *remote* and *impertinent*. For if this which he calls a Reason be a Truth, it will from thence necessarily follow, not only that the Doctrine of Christ must be conveyed by such a means as is more unalterable than the course of nature; but also by a clear parity of Reason, that all the means of our salvation do operate towards the accomplishing of their end with greater certainty than the fire burns, or the Sun shines; which they can never do, unless they operate more necessarily than any natural causes; now how they can do so upon voluntary Agents, I desire Mr. S. to inform me.

* P. 34.

§.3. He proceeds by a long Harangue to shew *, That not only these material Characters in themselves are corruptible, but *in complexion with the causes, actually laid in the World to preserve them entire; because either those causes are material, and then they are also liable to continual alterations; or spiritual, that is, the minds of men, and from these we may with good reason hope for a greater degree of constancy, than from any other piece of nature; which*
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by the way, is a very strange Paradox, that the actions of voluntary Agents have a greater certainty and constancy in them, than those of natural Agents; of which the fall of Angels and Men, compared with the continuance of the Sun and Stars in their first state, is a very good evidence.

§. 4. But he adds a Caution*, *That* * P. 35.
they are perfectly unalterable from their nature, and unerrable, if due circumstances be observed, that is, if due proposals be made to beget certain knowledge, and due care used to attend to such proposals. But who can warrant, *That due proposals will always be made to men, and due care used by them?* If these be uncertain, where's the constancy and unerrableness he talks so much of? So that notwithstanding the constancy of this spiritual cause (*the mind of man*) of preserving Scriptures entire, yet in order to this (as he tells* * P. 36.
us) so many actions are to be done, which are compounded and made up of an innumerable multitude of several particularities to be observed, every of which may be mistaken apart, each being a distinct little action in its single self, such
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* Dial. 2.
Sect. 7.

as is the transcribing of a whole Book, consisting of such Myriads of words, single letters, and tittles or stops; and the several actions of writing over each of these so short and cursory, that it prevents diligence, and exceeds humane care, to keep awake and apply distinct attentions to every of these distinct actions. Mr. Rushworth* much outdoes Mr. S. in these minute Cavils, for he tells us, That supposing an Original Copy of Christ's words, written by one of the Evangelists in the same language, let him have set down every word and syllable, yet men conversant in noting the changes of meanings in words will tell us, that divers accents in the pronunciation of them, the turning of the speakers head or body this way or that way, &c. may so change the sense of the words, that they will seem quite different in writing from what they were in speaking. I hope that Oral and Practical Tradition hath been careful to preserve all these circumstances, and hath deliver'd down Christ's Doctrine with all the right *Traditionary Accents, Nods, and Gestures* necessary for the understanding of it; otherwise the omission
of

of these may have so altered the sense of it; that it may be now quite different from what it was at first. But to answer Mr. S. We do not pretend to be assured, that it is naturally impossible that the Scriptures should have been corrupted or changed, but only to be sufficiently assured that they have not received any material alteration, from as good Arguments as the nature of the Subject will bear. But if his *Reason* had not been very *short* and *cursor*y, he might easily have reflected, that *Oral Tradition* is equally liable to all these contingencies. For it doth as much *prevent diligence*, and *exceed humane care*, to keep awake and apply distinct attentions to the distinct actions of speaking, as of writing. And I hope he will not deny, that a Doctrine *Orally delivered*, consists of words, and letters, and accents, and stops, as well as a Doctrine *written*; and that the several actions of speaking, are as *short* and *cursor*y as of writing.

§. 5. Secondly, He tells us *, *Scripture* * P. 38. *formally considered as to its significativeness, is also uncertain.* First, * Be- * P. 38. *cause of the uncertainty of the letter.* This is already answered. Secondly, * Be-

* P. 38.

* *Because the certain sense of it is not to be arrived to by the Vulgar, who are destitute of Languages and Arts.* True, where men are not permitted to have the Scriptures in their own Language, and understand no other : But where they are allowed the Scriptures translated into their own Language they may understand them, all necessary points of Faith and Practice being sufficiently plain in any Translation of the Bible that I know of : And that * eminent Wits cannot agree about the sense of Texts which concern the main points of Faith, hath been spoken to already.

* P. 38.

§. 6. As for the Reverence he pretends to Scripture in the conclusion of his *Fourth Discourse*, he might have spared that, after all the raillery and rudeness he hath used against it. It is easie to conjecture, both from his principles and his uncivil expressions concerning them, what his esteem is of those Sacred Oracles. Probably it was requisite in prudence to cast in a few good words concerning the Scriptures, for the sake of the more tender and squeamish Novices of their Religion, or (as
Mr.

Mr. *Rushworth's* Nephew * says frankly * Dial. 2. and openly) for the satisfaction of in- Sect. 14. different men, that have been brought up in this verbal and apparent respect of the Scripture, who it seems are not yet attained to that degree of Catholick Piety and Fortitude as to endure patiently that the Word of God should be reviled or slighted. Besides that, in reference to those whom they hope hereafter to convert (who might be too much alienated from their Religion, if he had expressed nothing but contempt towards a Book, which Protestants, and Christians in all Ages till the very dregs of Popery, have been bred up to a high veneration of); it was not much amiss to pass this formal complement upon the Bible; which the wise of his own Religion will easily understand, and may serve to catch the rest. But let him not deceive himself, *God is not mocked.*

SECT. VI.

* P. 41.

That the Properties of a Rule of Faith do not belong to Oral Tradition.

§. I. **S**Econdly, He comes to shew *,
That the Properties of a Rule of Faith belong to Oral Tradition. And,
First, He gives a tedious explication of the nature of this *Oral Practical Tradition*, which amounts to this; That as in reference to the civil Education of Children, *they are taught their own and others names, to write, and read, and exercise their Trades:* So in reference to Religion, the Children of Christians *first hear sounds, afterwards by degrees get dim notions of God, Christ, Saviour, Heaven, Hell, Vertue, Vice, and by degrees practise what they have heard; they are shewn to say Grace, and their Prayers, to hold up their hands, or perhaps eyes, and to kneel, and other postures.* Afterwards they are acquainted with the *Creed, Ten Commandments, and Sacraments, some common Forms of Prayer, and other practises of Christianity, and are directed to order their lives accordingly, and are guided in all this*
 by

by the actions and carriage of the elder faithful; and this goes on by insensible degrees, not by leaps, from a Hundred years to a Hundred, but from Month to Month, and even less. If this be all that Tradition doth, this is nothing but what is done among Protestants, and that with greater advantage; because we always teach Children to say their Prayers in a known Tongue so as they may understand them. And we also teach them the Creed, and Ten Commandments, and the Sacraments, so many as Christ hath instituted and no more. So that if this be so infallible a way of conveying the Doctrine of Christianity, we have it among us. And we do over and besides, instruct them in the Scriptures, which are the authentick Instrument whereby Christ's Doctrine is conveyed to us. But then we do not suppose (as his *Hypothesis* necessarily enforceth him to do) that the Christian Doctrine is equally taught and learned by all; but by some more, by others less perfectly, according to the different abilities and diligence of

Parents and Teachers, and the various capacities and dispositions of Children; whereas his *Hypothesis* falls, if all or at least the generality of Parents do not instruct their Children with the like exactness, and if the generality of Children do not receive this Doctrine in the same perfection that it is delivered. For if it be taught or received with any variation, it must necessarily be so conveyed, and these variations will grow daily. I had thought he would have told us, how all Parents do teach their Children the whole Body of Christ's Doctrine, and explain to them every part of it in a Hundred or a Thousand several expressions signifying the same sense, and not have instanced in two *Set-forms*, such as the *Creed*, and *Ten Commandments*; for according to Mr. *White* *, *That cannot be a Tradition, which is delivered in set-words.*

* Apolog.
P. 81.

§. 2. Having thus explained Oral Tradition, he comes to shew that the Properties of a Rule of Faith agree
to

to it. I have already shewed that the true Properties of a *Rule of Faith* are but *two*, viz. *That it be plain and intelligible, and that it be sufficiently certain.* The *first* of these, that Oral Tradition may deliver a Doctrine plainly and intelligibly, I grant him. All the difficulty is about the *second* Property, whether we have sufficient assurance that the Doctrine delivered down by Oral Tradition hath received no corruption or change in its conveyance? And all that he pretends to prove in this *Discourse* is, That if this Rule hath been followed and kept to all along, the Christian Doctrine neither hath, nor can have received any change; that is, if the next Age after the Apostles did truly, and without any alteration deliver the Christian Doctrine to their immediate Successors, and they to theirs, and so on, then upon this supposition the Doctrine of the present Traditionary Church must be the very same with that which was delivered to the Apostles. All this is readily granted to him. But that this Rule hath always

been followed, nay, that it is impossible there should have been any deviation from it (as he pretends) this we deny, not only as untrue, but as one of the most absurd Propositions that ever yet pretended to demonstrative evidence.

THE

THE
RULE of FAITH.

PART III.

*In which Mr. S's Demonstrations
and Corollaries are examined.*

SECT. I.

§. I. **B**Efore I come to speak particularly to his *Demonstrations*, I shall premise these *two Considerations*. *First*, That (according to the Principles of the Patrons of Tradition) no man can by his private Reason certainly find out the true *Rule of Faith*. *Secondly*, That (according to Mr. S.) the way of Demonstration is no certain way to find out the *Rule of Faith*. If either of these be made out, his Demonstrations lose all their force. If the *first* be

Considerations touching his Demonstrations in general.

L 4 made

made good, then he cannot demonstrate the Infallibility of Tradition, nor consequently that *that* is the *Rule of Faith*. If the *second*, then the way of Demonstration which he pretends to take signifies nothing.

§. 2. *First*, No man can (according to the principles of the Patrons of Tradition) by his private Reason certainly find out what is the *Rule of Faith*. Suppose a Heathen to be desirous to inform himself of the Christian Faith; in order to which he is inquisitive after some Rule by which he may take a measure of it, and come certainly to know what it is : He enquires of Christians what their Rule is, and finds them divided about it, some saying that the Scriptures, others that Oral Tradition is the Rule. In this case it is not possible (without a Revelation) for this man to find out the *Rule of Faith*, but by his own private Reason examining and weighing the arguments and pretences of both sides. And when he hath done this, unless he can by his Reason demonstrate that the one is a certain and infallible Rule, and the other not so, he hath not (according to Mr. S.)
found

found out the *Rule of Faith*. But Reason can never do this, according to Mr. s. For speaking of demonstrating the certainty of Tradition, he tells us *, *That Tradition hath for its Basis* * P. 53. *mans nature not according to his Intellectuals, which do but darkly grope in the pursuit of Science, &c.* And again *, * Append: 2d. P. 183. *speaking how Reason brings men to the Rule of Faith, he uses this comparison, She is like a dim-sighted man, who used his Reason to find a trusty Friend to lead him in the twilight, and then relied on his guidance rationally without using his own Reason at all about the Way it self.* So that (according to him) the certainty of Tradition cannot be founded on Demonstration, because it is not founded in the *intellectual* part of man, which only can demonstrate. Besides, if it were founded in the intellectual part, yet that can never be able to demonstrate the certainty of Tradition, because that faculty which is *dim-sighted*, and does but *grobe darkly in the pursuit of Science*, is incapable of framing Demonstrations. Nor can any man understand how *dim-sighted* reason should see clearly to choose its guide, any more than

than its way, especially if it be considered what a pretty Contradiction it is, to say that Reason as it is *dim-sighted* can see clearly.

But Mr. *Cressy* is not contented to call every mans Reason *dim-sighted*, he ventures a step further, and calls it *hood-winkt* and *blind*: For he tells us*,
 * Append. c. 6. Sect. 8. That private Reason is apparently a most
 * Ibid. Sect. 9. fallible guide; and he pities* my Lord Falkland's case, because in the search of the true Religion he did betake himself to the casual conduct of blind, humane, natural Reason, which afterwards he
 * Ibid. Sect. 11. calls* a guide that two persons cannot possibly follow together, because no two persons (that ever followed any other guide beside Authority) did or could think all things to be reasonable that all others thought so; and by consequence such a guide that as long as he continues in that office, there cannot possibly be any Church any where: which (says he) is an infallible evi^dtion that this is an imaginary seducing guide, since it is impossible that that should be a guide appointed for any Christian, which neither Christ nor his Apostles, nor any of their Followers ever mentioned, yea,
 which

which formally destroys one of our twelve Articles of the Apostles Creed, viz. I believe the Holy Catholick Church. Thus he does by Reason *clearly and infallibly evince*, that Reason cannot be otherwise than a most *blind and fallible guide*. This it is to talk of things when a man looks only upon one side of them; as if because Reason has a *blind side* and is uncertain in some things, therefore we ought to conclude her *universally blind* and uncertain in every thing; and as if because all men cannot think all things reasonable which any one man thinks to be so, therefore it is to be doubted whether those common Principles of Reason be true which Mankind are generally agreed in. And that Mr. Cressy speaks here of the use of our private Reason in the finding out of our Rule, is clear from what he says in the next *Section*, viz. *That this hood-wink't guide (enquiring into Scripture, and searching after Tradition) may possibly stumble upon the way to Unity and Truth, that is, the true Catholick Church.* If this be true, why does Mr. S. pretend that he can by Reason demonstrate the Infallibility of Tradition, and by
this

this *hood-wink't guide* lead men to the true *Rule of Faith*? And what a pitiful encouragement would this be to an inquisitive Philosopher (who knowing no other guide but his Reason, whereby to find out whether Scripture or Tradition be the true Rule) to tell him that by the help of this *hood-wink't guide* he might possibly stumble upon the right?

A man may justly stand amazed at the inconsistency of these mens Discourses and Principles. In one *mood* they are all for *Demonstration*, and for convincing men *in the way of perfect Science* which is the true *Rule of Faith*: But then again when another *fit* takes them, there's no such thing as Science, *humane Reason* grows all on the sudden *dim-sighted*, and at the next word is struck *stark blind*; and then the very utmost that it can do towards the bringing of an unprejudiced and inquisitive person to the true *Rule of Faith*, is to leave him in a *possibility of stumbling* upon it; but if he be a Heretick that makes use of private Reason for his guide, then * *it is impossible but that he with his blind guide should fall into the Pit*. I cannot for my part imagine how they can reconcile the

* Append.
c. 7. Sect. 8.

the *blindness* of humane Reason with all that noise which they make about Science and Demonstration ; but this I must confess that these kind of Discourses which I meet with in Mr. S. and Mr. *Cressy*, are very proper Arguments to perswade a man of the blindness of humane Reason. And indeed there is one passage in Mr. *Cressy*, which gives me very great satisfaction concerning these matters, where he tells us *, That the *Wit and Judgment of Catholicks is to renounce their own Judgment, and depose their own Wit.* Now he that professes to have done this may write Contradictions, and no body ought to challenge him for it. However, it is a very ingenuous acknowledgment, that when he forsook our Church and turned Papist, he laid aside his Judgment and Wit ; which is just such an heroick act of Judgment, as if a man in a bravery to shew his liberty should sell himself for a slave. I am glad to understand from an experienced Person, what charges a man must be at when he turns *Roman-Catholique*, namely, that whoever will embrace that Religion must forfeit his Reason.

* Ibid.

* P. 253.
 & 254.

§. 3. Secondly, The way of Demonstration is (according to Mr. S.) no certain way to find out the *Rule of Faith*. In his 4th Appendix * against my Lord of Down, one of the *Eight Mines* (as he calls them) which he lays to blow up my Lords Dissuasive against Popery, is this, That the method he takes in dissuading cannot be held in reason to have power to dissuade, unless it be proper to that effect, that is, not common to that effect and a contrary one. Now, that being most evidently no method or way to such an effect which many follow and take, yet arrive not at that effect, 'tis plain to common sense, that my Lord of Down miscalls his Book *A Dissuasive*, and that it can have in it no power of moving the understanding one way or other, unless he can first vouch some particularity in the method he takes, above what's in others in which we experience miscarriage, &c. If this be true, then his method of Demonstration is no way to make men certain of what he pretends to demonstrate, because that is most evidently no way to an effect which many follow and take, yet arrive not at that effect; so that 'tis plain

plain to common sense that Mr. S's Demonstrations can have in them no power of moving the understanding one way or other, unless he can vouch some particularity in the Demonstrations he pretends to bring, above what is in other pretended Demonstrations in which we experience miscarriage. Do not Thomas, and Scotus (as Mr. White tells us *) all along pretend to demonstrate? and yet it is generally believed that (at least where they contradict one another) one of them failed in his Demonstrations. Did not Mr. Charles Thynne pretend to have demonstrated that a man at one jump might leap from London to Rome? and yet I do not think any one was ever satisfy'd with his Demonstration. And Mr. S. knows one in the World (whom I will not name, because he hath since ingenuously acknowledged his Errour) who thought he had demonstrated the *Quadrature of the Circle*, and was so confident of it as to venture the reputation of his Demonstrations in Divinity upon it, and some of those Divinity Demonstrations were the very same with Mr. S's. Since therefore the World hath experienced so

* Extasis,
P. 24.

so much *miscarriage* in the way of Demonstration, before Mr. s's Demonstrations can be allowed to signifie any thing, *he must* (according to his own Law) *vouch some particularity* in his *way* and *method* of Demonstration above what is in other mens. He hath not any where (that I remember) told us what that *particularity* is, wherein his *way* of Demonstration is above other mens: Nor can I upon the most diligent search find any peculiar advantage that his *Way* has more than theirs above mentioned; unless this be one that he pretends to demonstrate a self-evident Principle, and herein I think he hath plainly the advantage of Mr. *Charles Thynne*; and unless this may be counted another advantage, that he has so extraordinary a confidence and conceit of his own Demonstrations; and in this particular, I must acknowledge that he clearly excels all that have gone before him: In all other things, his way of Demonstration is but like his neighbours.

SECT.

SECT. II.

§. 1. **I** Come now to examine his De-Mr. S's de-
monstrations of this *Self-evi-* ^{monstration}
dent Principle (as he often calls it) ^{a priori.}
 that Oral Tradition is a certain and in-
 fallible way of conveying Christs Do-
 ctrine from one Age to another, without
 any corruption or change ; which is to
 say, that it is impossible but that this
 Rule should always have been kept to.
 That this is not a *Self-evident Principle*,
 needs no other evidence than that he
 goes about to *demonstrate* it. But yet,
 notwithstanding this, I think he hath as
 much reason to call *this* a *Self-evident*
Principle, as to call his *proofs* of it *De-*
monstrations.

§. 2. In order to his Demonstration
a Priori, he lays * these four grounds, * P. 59, 60.
 which I shall set down in his own
 words. First, *That Christian Doctrine*
was at first unanimously settled by the
Apostles, in the hearts of the faithful dis-
persed in great multitudes over several
parts of the World. Secondly, *That*
this Doctrine was firmly believed by all
those faithful to be the way to Heaven,
 M and

and the contradictting or deserting it, to be the way to damnation; so that the greatest hopes and fears imaginable were by engaging the Divine Authority strongly applied to the minds of the first Believers, encouraging them to the adhering to that Doctrine, and deterring them from relinquishing it; and indeed infinitely greater than any other whatever, springing from any temporal consideration: and that this was in all Ages the persuasion of the faithful. Thirdly, That hopes of good and fears of harms strongly applied are the causes of actual will. Fourthly, That the thing was feasible or within their power; that what they were bred to was knowable by them. This put, it follows as certainly that a great number or body of the first Believers and after faithful in each Age, that is, from Age to Age would continue to hold themselves and teach their Children as themselves had been taught, that is, would follow and stick to Tradition, as it doth, that a cause put actually causing produceth its effect. This is his Demonstration with the grounds of it.

§. 3. To shew the vanity and weakness of this pretended Demonstration, I shall assail

assail it these *three* wayes; by shewing, *First*, That if the grounds of it were true they would conclude too much, and prove that to be impossible which common experience evinceth, and himself must grant to have been. *Secondly*, That his main grounds are apparently false. *Thirdly*, That his Demonstration is confuted by clear and undeniable Instances to the contrary.

SECT. III.

§. 1. **I**F the grounds of it were true, they would conclude too much, and prove that to be impossible which common experience evinceth and himself must grant to have been. For if these two *Principles* be true, *That the greatest hopes and fears are strongly applied to the minds of all Christians; and that those hopes and fears strongly applied are the cause of actual will to adhere constantly to Christ's Doctrine*: then from hence it follows that none that entertain this Doctrine can ever fall from it; because falling from it is inconsistent with an actual will of adhering constantly to it. For supposing (as he

The *First* answer to this Demonstration.

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doth)

doth) certain and constant causes of actual will to adhere to this Doctrine, those who entertain it must actually will to adhere to it, because *a cause put actually causing produceth its effect*, which is constant adherence to it. And if this were true these two things would be impossible. *First*, That any Christian should turn Apostate or Heretick. *secondly*, That any Christian should live wickedly. Both which not only frequent and undoubted experience doth evince, but himself must grant, *de facto* to have been.

§. 2. *First*. It would be impossible that any Christian should turn *Apostate* or *Heretick*. *Herese* according to him is nothing else but the *renouncing of Tradition*. Now he tells us *, *That the first Renouncers of Tradition must have been true Believers or holders of it, ere they renounced it*; and I suppose there is the same reason for *Apostates*. But if all Christians or true Believers (as he calls them) have these Arguments of hope and fear strongly applied; and hope and fear strongly applied be the causes of actual will to adhere to this Doctrine; 'tis necessary all Christians should

* P. 60.

should adhere to it, and impossible there should be either Apostates or Hereticks. For if these causes be put in *all the faithful actually causing* (as the Grounds of his Demonstration suppose) and *indefectibleness be the proper and necessary effect of these causes*, as he also saith *, then it is impossible, that where * P. 75. these causes are put, there should be any defection. For a proper and necessary effect cannot but be where the causes of such an effect are put; especially if they be put actually causing; and consequently 'tis impossible that any single Christian should ever either totally apostatize or fall into Heresie, *that is*, renounce Tradition.

§. 3. And that this is a genuine consequence from these Principles (though he will not acknowledg it here, because he saw it would ruine his Demonstration) is liberally acknowledged by him in other parts of his Discourse. For he tells us *, *That it exceeds all the* * P. 54. *power of nature (abstracting from the causes of madness and violent disease) to blot the knowledges of this Doctrine out of the soul of one single Believer.* And * *that since no man can hold con-* * P. 78.

* P. 89.

*trary to his knowledg, nor doubt of what he holds, nor change and innovate without knowing he doth so, it is a manifest impossibility a whole Age should fall into an absurdity so inconsistent with the nature of one single man. And *, That it is perhaps impossible for one single man to attempt to deceive posterity by renouncing Tradition. Which passages laid together amount to thus much, That it is impossible that Tradition should fail in any one single person. And though in the passage last cited he speak faintly, and with a perhaps, as if he apprehended some danger in speaking too peremptorily, yet any one would easily see the last to be as impossible as any of the rest. And he himself elsewhere, being in the full Career of his Bombast Rhetorick, delivers it roundly without fear or wit *, Sooner may the sinews of entire nature by overstraining crack, and she lose all her activity and motion, than is, her self, than one single part of that innumerable multitude which integrate that vast testification which we call Tradition can possibly be violated.*

* P. 54.

§. 4. But it may be we deal too hardly with him and press his Demonstration
too

too far, because he tells us he only intends by it to prove that the generality of Christians will always adhere to Tradition. But if he intended to prove no more but this, he should then have brought a Demonstration that would have concluded no more; but this concludes of all as well as of the generality of Christians: A clear evidence that it is no Demonstration, because it concludes that which is evidently false, That there can be no Apostates or Hereticks. Besides, supposing his Demonstration to conclude only that the generality of Christians would always adhere to Tradition, this is as plainly confuted by experience, if there be any credit to be given to History. St. Hierom tells us *, That *Liberius* Bishop of Rome (for all his particular Title to Infallibility built upon Tradition, as Mr. S. speaks, Coroll. 28.) turned Arian. And that * Arianism was establish'd by the Synod of Ariminum, which was a Council more general than that of Trent. And that * almost all the Churches in the whole World under the names of Peace and of the Emperour, were polluted by Communion with the

* Chron.
ad Annum
Christ.
352.

* Ad An. 363.

* Ad An. 364.

* Advers. Lucifer. *Arians.* Again, That * *under the Emperour Constantius (Eusebius and Hippatius being Consuls) Infidelity was subscribed under the names of Unity and Faith. And * that the whole World groaned and wondered to see it self turned Arian.* And he * uses this as an argument to the *Luciferians*, to receive into the Church those who had been defiled with the Heresie of *Arius*, because the number of those who had kept themselves Orthodox, was so exceeding small : For (says he) the Synod of Nice which consisted of above Three hundred Bishops, received Eight Arian Bishops whom they might have cast out without any great loss to the Church; I wonder then how some, and those the followers of the Nicene Faith can think that three Confessors (*viz.* Athanasius, Hilarius, Eusebius) ought not to do that in case of necessity for the good and safety of the whole World, which so many and such excellent Persons did voluntarily. It seems *Arianism* had prevailed very far, when St. Hierom could not name above three eminent Persons in the Church who had preserved themselves untainted with it.

* In Epist. ad Galat. l. 3. Again *, Arius in Alexandria was at first

first but one spark, but because it was not presently extinguish'd it broke out into a flame which devoured the whole World. Gregory Nazianzen * likewise * Orat. 20. & tells us to the same purpose, That the^{21.} Arian Heresie seized upon the greatest part of the Church. And, to shew that he knew nothing of Mr. S's Demonstration of the indefectibility of the generality of Christians, he asks *, Where * Orat. 25. are those that define the Church by multitude, and despise the little Flock, &c? And this Heresie was of a long continuance, for from its first rise which happened in the 20th year of Constantine, it continued (as Job. Abbas * hath calculated it) 266 years. And the Pelagian Heresie (if we may believe Bradwardine, one of the great Champions of the Church against it) did in a manner prevail as much as Arianism, as the said Author complains in his Preface to his Book *, That almost the whole * Caus. Dei. World was run after Pelagius into Error. Will Mr. S. now say, that in the height of these Heresies the generality of Christians did firmly adhere to Tradition? If he say they did, let him answer the express Testimonies produced to

to the contrary : But if they did not, then his Demonstration also fails as to the *generality of Christians*. And if the greater part of Christians may fall off from Tradition, what Demonstration can make it impossible for the lesser to do so ? Who will say it is in Reason impossible that a *Thousand* persons should relinquish Tradition, though *Nine hundred* of them have already done it, and though the remainder be no otherwise secured from doing so than those were who have actually relinquish't it ? Now is not this a clear evidence that this which he calls a Demonstration *a Priori*, is no such thing ? Because every Demonstration *a Priori*, must be from causes which are *necessary*, whereas his Demonstration is from *voluntary* causes. So that unless he can prove that *voluntary* causes are *necessary*, he shall never demonstrate that it is impossible for the generality of any company of men to err who have every one of them free-will, and are every one of them liable to passion and mistake.

§. 5. From all this it appears, that his whole *Discourse* about the Original and

and Progress of Heresie, and the multitudes of Hereticks in several Ages, is as clear a confutation of his own Demonstration as can be desired. The only thing that he offers in that *Discourse*, to prevent this Objection which he foresaw it liable to, is this, *It is not* (says he*) *to be expected but that some contingencies should have place, where an whole Species in a manner is to be wrought upon; it sufficeth that the causes to preserve Faith indeficiently entire are as efficacious as those which are laid for the preservation of Mankind, the vertue of Faith not being to continue longer than Mankind its only subject does; and they will easily appear as efficacious as the other, if we consider the strength of those causes before explicated, and reflect that they are effecttively powerful to make multitudes daily debar themselves of those pleasures which are the causes of Mankinds propagation; and if we look into History for experience of what hath passed in the World since the propagating of Christianity, we shall find more particulars failing in propagating their kind, than their Faith. To which I answer,*

First,

First, That it may reasonably be expected there should be no contingencies in any particulars, where causes of actual will are supposed to be put in all: *Because* (as he says truly) *a cause put actually causing cannot but produce its effect*. Suppose then constant causes laid in all Mankind of an actual will to speak Truth to the best of their knowledge, were it not reasonable to expect that there would be no such contingency to the Worlds end as that any man should tell a lye? Nay, it were madness for any man to think any such contingency should be, supposing causes actually causing men always to speak Truth.

Secondly, It is far from Truth that the causes to preserve Faith indefinitely entire, are as efficacious as those which are laid for the propagation of Mankind. And whereas he would prove the strength of these causes which are laid to preserve Faith, because they are effectively powerful to make multitudes daily debar themselves of those pleasures which are the causes of Mankinds propagation; I hope no body that hath read the innumerable complaints which occur

*An argu-
ment
for the
truth*

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occur in their own Historians, and others of the best and most credible of their own Writers, of more than one Age, concerning the general viciousness and debauchery of their Priests and Monks, will he overforward to believe that all those who debar themselves of lawful Marriage, do abstain from those unlawful pleasures.

§. 6. But nothing can be more impudent than what he adds, *That if we look into Histories for experience of what hath past in the World since the first planting of Christianity, we shall find far more particulars failing in propagating their kind, than their Faith.* Do any Histories confirm it to have been the experience of the World, that the far greatest part of the World did in any Age give over propagating their kind? But Histories do confirm that the far greatest part of the Christian World did fall off to *Arianism* and *Pelagianism*; and consequently, as he supposeth, did desert and renounce Tradition. Did ever whole Nations and vast Territories of the World either wholly, or for the far greatest part of them, take upon humour against propagating Mankind?

Mankind? And yet both History, and the experience of the present Age assures us, that a great part of *Asia* and of *Africk* (where the most flourishing Churches in the World once were) are fallen off from *Christianity*, and become either *Mahometans* or *Heathens*. In *Africk* almost all those vast *Regions*, which Christianity had gained from Heathenism, Mahometanism hath regained from Christianity. All the North-part of *Afrique* lying along the *Mediterranean* (where Christianity flourish't once as much as ever it did at *Rome*) is at this time utterly void of Christians, excepting a few Towns in the hands of the European Princes. And not to mention all particular places, the large Region of *Nubia*, which had (as is thought) from the Apostles time professed the Christian Faith, hath within these 150 years for want of Ministers (as *Alvarez* * tells us) quitted Christianity, and is partly revolted to Heathenism, partly fallen off to Mahometanism. So that it seems, that notwithstanding the *Arguments of hope and fear*, the very Teachers of Tradition may fail in a largely extended Church.

As

* Hist.
Æthiop.

As for *Asia*, in the *Easterly* parts of it, there is not now one Christian to four of what there were 500 years ago; and in the more *southerly* parts of it (where Christianity had taken deepest root) the Christians are far inferiour in number to the Idolaters and Mahometans, and do daily decrease. What thinks Mr. S. of all this? Have those Christian Nations which are turn'd Mahometans and Pagans failed in their Faith or not? If they have, I expect from him clear Instances of more that have failed in propagating their kind.

6. 7. But, besides those who have totally Apostatized from Christianity, hath not the whole *Greek Church* with the *Jacobites* and *Nestorians*, and all those other *sects* which agree with and depend upon these, and which taken together are manifoldly greater than the *Roman Church*; I say, have not all these renounced Tradition for several Ages? And here in *Europe*, hath not a great part of *Poland*, *Hungary*, both *Germany's*, *France*, and *Switzerland*? Have not the Kingdoms of great *Britain*, *Denmark*, *Sweden*, and a considerable part of *Ireland*, in Mr. S's opinion deserted

deserted Tradition? If I should once see a whole Nation fail, because no body would marry and contribute to the propagation of Mankind; and should find this sullen humour to prevail in several Nations, and to overspread vast Parts of the World, I should, then in good earnest think it possible for Mankind to fail; unless I could shew it impossible for other Nations to do that which I see some to have done, who were every whit as unlikely to have done it. So that whatever *cause* he assigns of *Hereſe* *, as *Pride, Ambition, Luſt*, or any other vice or interest, if these can take place in whole Nations, and make them renounce Tradition, then where's *the efficacy of the causes to preserve Faith indeficiently entire in any?* For the Demonstration holds as strongly for all Christians as for any.

* P. 67.

§. 8. *Secondly*, From these grounds it would follow that no Christian can live wickedly; because the end of Faith being a good life, the arguments of hope and fear must in all Reason be as powerful and efficacious causes of a good life, as of a true belief. And that his *Demonstration* proves the one as much

much as the other, will be evident from his own reasoning; for he * argues in * P. 62. this manner, *Good is the proper object of the will, good propos'd makes the will to desire that good, and consequently the known means to obtain it : Now infinite goods and harms sufficiently proposed are of their own nature incomparably more powerful causes to carry the will than temporal ones. Since then, when two causes are counterpoised, the lesser when it comes to execution is no cause as to the substance of that effect, it follows that there is no cause to move the wills of a World of Believers to be willing to do that which they judge would lose themselves and their Posterity infinite goods, and bring them infinite harms, &c. in case a sufficient Proposal or Application be not wanting, which he tells us * is not wanting, because Christianity urged to execution, gives its followers a new life and a new nature, than which a nearer Application cannot be imagined. Doth not this Argument extend to the lives of Christians, as well as their Belief? So that he may as well infer from these grounds, that it is impossible that those who profess Christianity should live*

contrary to it, as that they should fail to deliver down the Doctrine of Christ; because whatever can be an inducement and temptation to any man, to contradict this Doctrine by his practice, may equally prevail upon him to falsify it. For why should men make any more scruple of damning themselves and their Posterity by teaching them false Doctrines, than by living wicked Lives? which are equally pernicious with Heretical Doctrines, not only upon account of the bad influence which such examples of Fathers and Teachers are like to have upon their Scholars, but likewise as they are one of the strongest arguments in the World to persuade them, that their Teachers do not themselves believe that Religion which they teach; for if they did, they would live according to it. Why should any man think, that those arguments of hope and fear which will not prevail upon the generality of Christians to make them live holy Lives, should be so necessarily efficacious to make them so much concerned for the preserving of a right Belief? Nay, we have great reason to believe that such persons will endeavour

deavour as much as may be, to bend and accommodate their Belief to their Lives. And this is the true source of those Innovations in Faith for which we challenge the Church of *Rome*; which any man may easily discern, who will but consider how all their new Doctrines are fitted to a secular Interest, and the gratifying of that inordinate appetite after riches and dominion which reigns in the Court of *Rome*; and in the upper part of the Clergy of that Church.

SECT. IV.

§. 1. *Secondly*, The main grounds of The second Answer to his Demonstration. his Demonstration are apparently false: For,

First, This Demonstration supposeth that the generality of Christian Parents in all Ages perfectly understood the Doctrine of Christ, and did not mistake any part of it; that they remembered it perfectly, and that they were faithful and diligent to instruct their Children in it; which is as contrary to experience as that the generality of Christians are knowing and honest. It

* P. 53.

supposeth likewise, that this Doctrine, and every substantial part of it, was received and remembred by the generality of Children as it was taught, and was understood perfectly by them without the least material mistake: So he tells us *, *That the substance of Faith comes clad in such plain matters of Fact, that the most stupid man living cannot possibly be ignorant of it.* But whether this be reasonable to be supposed or no, may easily be determined not only from every man's own experience of the World, but from a more advantagious Instance of the experience of the first Age of Christianity. Was there ever a more knowing and diligent Teacher of this Doctrine than our Saviour? and yet his Disciples fell into many mistakes concerning it. So that in order to the certain propagating of it, the wisdom of God thought it requisite to endue even those who had learned this Doctrine from himself with an infallible spirit, by which they might be led into all Truth, and secured from error and mistake; which had been unnecessary had it been impossible for them to mistake this Doctrine. The Apostles, who

who taught the World by an infallible Spirit, and with infinitely more advantage than ordinary Parents can teach their Children, yet in all the Churches which they planted they found Christians very apt to mistake and pervert their Doctrine, as appears by their frequent complaints in most of their Epistles. Nay the Apostle chargeth the Generality of the *Hebrews* * with such a degree of dulness and stupidity, that after sitting time and means of instruction they were still ignorant of the very Principles of Christianity: So he tells them, *That when for the time they ought to be Teachers of others, they had need that one should teach them again which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God.* And St. Hierom tells us *, *That the Primitive Churches were tainted with many gross Errors whilst the Apostles were alive, and the blood of Christ yet warm in Judea.* But it may be there have been better Teachers since, and Children are more apt to learn now than Men were then. Who knows how the World may be changed?

* Heb. 5. 11, 12.

* Advers. Luciferian.

§. 2. Secondly, This Demonstration supposeth the hopes and fears which Christian

stian Religion applies to Mens minds to be certain and necessary causes of actual will in Men to adhere to the Doctrine of Christ; and consequently that they must necessarily adhere to it. That he supposeth them to be *necessary*, I have his own word for it; for he tells us *, *That he hath endeavoured to demonstrate the indefectibleness of Tradition as the proper and necessary effect of those causes which preserve and continue Tradition on foot*; and what those causes are he told us before *, *That they are Hopes and Fears strongly applied*. But I hope that the indefectibleness of Tradition cannot be a *necessary effect* of the strong application of those Hopes and Fears, unless those Hopes and Fears be a *necessary cause* of that effect. And indeed this is sufficiently implied in his saying *that they are the causes of actual will* in Christians to adhere to Tradition. For if these *causes of actual will* be constant (as he must suppose) then they are certain and necessary and infallible causes of adhering to this Doctrine. For whatever is in act is necessary while it is so, and if it be constantly in act, the effect is always necessary.

* P. 75.

* P. 60.

sary. But what a wild Supposition is this, That Moral Motives and Arguments working upon a free Principle, the Will of Man, do necessarily produce their Effect? Is it necessary that the hopes of Heaven, and the fears of Hell should keep Christians constant to the Doctrine of Christ? and is it not as necessary that these arguments should prevail upon them to the practice of it? It is in vain to go about to demonstrate that all men must be good who have sufficient arguments propounded to them, when experience tells us the contrary. Nay, it is in reason impossible that Moral arguments should be of a necessary and infallible efficacy, because they are always propounded to a free Agent, who may choose whether he will yield to them or not. Indeed it is always reasonable that men should yield to them, and if they be reasonable they will; but so long as they are free it can never be infallibly certain that they will. And if men be not free, it is no vertue at all in them to be wrought upon by these arguments. For what vertue can it be in any man to entertain the Christian doctrine and adhere to it

* P. 53.

and live accordingly, if he does all this necessarily, *that is*, whether he will or no, and can no more choose whether he will do so or not, than whether he will see the light when the Sun shines upon his open eyes, or whether he will hear a sound when all the Bells in the Town are Ringing in his ears, or (to use Mr. S's * own similitudes) whether he will *feel heat, cold, pain, pleasure, or any other material quality that affects his senses.* We see then how unreasonable his Suppositions are, and yet without these Grounds his Demonstration falls. For if it be possible that Christians may mistake or forget the Doctrine of Christ, or any part of it, or be defective in diligence to instruct others in it; or if it be possible that the Will of man which is free, may not be necessarily and infallibly swayed by the arguments of hope and fear, then it is possible that Tradition may fail. And is not this a good Demonstration which supports it self upon such Principles as do directly affront the constant experience, and the clearest reason of Mankind?

§. 3. And here I cannot but take notice how inconsistent he is to himself in
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laying the Grounds of Tradition's certainty. In one Part of his Book he tells us *, *That Tradition hath for its Basis the best Nature in the Universe, that is, Mans; Not according to his Moral part, defectible by reason of Original Corruption; nor yet his Intellectuals, darkly groping in the pursuit of Science, &c. But according to those Faculties in him perfectly and necessarily subject to the operations and strokes of Nature, that is, his Eyes, Ears, Handling, and the direct impressions of knowledg, as naturally and necessarily issuing from the affecting those senses, as it is to feel heat, cold, pain, pleasure, or any other material quality.* So that according to this Discourse, the *Basis of Tradition* is not *Mans Nature* considered as *Moral*, and capable of *Intellectual Reflection*; for in this consideration it is *dark* and *defectible*: But *Mans Nature* considered only as capable of *direct sensitive knowledg*, and as acting *naturally and necessarily*. Which is to say, That Tradition is founded in the Nature of Man considered not as a Man but a Brute; under which consideration, I see no reason why he should call it *the best Nature in the Universe*.

* P. 53.

and live accordingly, if he does all this necessarily, *that is*, whether he will or no, and can no more choose whether he will do so or not, than whether he will see the light when the Sun shines upon his open eyes, or whether he will hear a sound when all the Bells in the Town are Ringing in his ears, or (to use Mr. S's * own similitudes) whether he will *feel heat, cold, pain, pleasure, or any other material quality that affects his senses.* We see then how unreasonable his Suppositions are, and yet without these Grounds his Demonstration falls. For if it be possible that Christians may mistake or forget the Doctrine of Christ, or any part of it, or be defective in diligence to instruct others in it; or if it be possible that the Will of man which is free, may not be necessarily and infallibly swayed by the arguments of hope and fear, then it is possible that Tradition may fail. And is not this a good Demonstration which supports it self upon such Principles as do directly affront the constant experience, and the clearest reason of Mankind?

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verse. But now how will he reconcile this Discourse with the *Grounds* of his *Demonstration*? where he tells us, That the stability of Tradition is founded in the *Arguments of Hope and Fear*, the Objects of which being future and at a distance, cannot work upon a man immediately by *direct Impressions* upon his *senses*, but must work upon him by way of *Intellectual Reflection* and *Consideration*. For I hope he will not deny but that the *Arguments of Hope and Fear* work upon man according to his Moral and Intellectual part, else how are they Arguments? And if man according to his *Moral part* be (as he says) *defectible*, how can the *indefectibility* of Tradition be founded in those Arguments which work upon man only according to his *Moral part*? I have purposely all along (both for the Readers ease and mine own) neglected to take notice of several of his inconsistencies, but these are such clear and transparent Contradictions, that I could do no less than make an example of them.

SECT.

SECT. V.

§. 1. **T***Hirdly*, This Demonstration is confuted by clear and undeniable *Instances* to the contrary. I will mention but *two*.

First, The Tradition of the one true God, which was the easiest to be preserved of any Doctrine in the World, being short and plain, planted in every mans Nature, and perfectly suited to the reason of Mankind. And yet this Tradition, not having past through many hands (by reason of the long Age of man) was so defaced and corrupted, that the World did lapse into Polytheism and Idolatry. Now a man that were so hardy as to demonstrate against matter of Fact, might by a stronger Demonstration than Mr. S's, prove that though it be certain this Tradition hath failed, yet it was impossible it should fail; as *Zeno* demonstrated the impossibility of motion against *Diogenes* walking before his eyes. For the Doctrine of the one true God was settled in the heart of Noah, and firmly believed by him to be the way to happiness, and

and the contradicting or deserting of this, to be the way to misery. And this Doctrine was by him so taught to his Children, who were encouraged by these Motives to adhere to this Doctrine, and to propagate it to their Children, and were deterred by them from relinquishing it. And this was in all Ages the perswasion of the faithful. Now the Hopes of Happiness, and the Fears of Misery strongly applied, are the causes of actual will. Besides, the thing was feasible, or within their power; that is, what they were bred to was knowable by them, and that much more easily than any other Doctrine whatsoever, being short, and plain, and natural. This put, it follows as certainly that a great number in each Age would continue to hold themselves, and teach their Children as themselves had been taught, that is, would follow and stick to this Tradition of the one true God, as it doth that a cause put actually causing produceth its effect. Actually I say; for since the cause is put, and the Patient disposed, it follows inevitably that the cause is put still actually causing. This demonstration which concludes an apparent falshood hath

hath the whole strength of Mr. S's, and several advantages beyond it. For the Doctrine conveyed by this Tradition is the most important, being the first Principle of all Religion; the danger of corrupting it as great, the facility of preserving it much greater, than of the Christian Doctrine, for the causes before mentioned. And yet after all, it signifies nothing against certain experience, and unquestionable matter of Fact; only it sufficiently shews the vanity of Mr. S's pretended Demonstration built upon the same or weaker Grounds.

§. 2. *Secondly*, The other Instance shall be in the *Greek Church*, who received the Christian Doctrine as entire from the Apostles, and had as great an obligation to propagate it truly to Posterity, and the same fears and hopes strongly applied to be the actual causes of will; in a word, all the same Arguments and Causes to preserve and continue Tradition on foot, which the *Roman Church* had: And yet, to the utter confusion of Mr. S's Demonstration, Tradition hath failed among them. For as *Speculators*, they deny the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, and as
 Testifiers

Testifiers they disown any such Doctrine to have been delivered to them by the precedent Age, or to any other Age of their Church by the Apostles as the Doctrine of Christ.

* Apology for Tradition,
P. 51.

§. 3. To this *Instance* of the *Greek Church*, because Mr. *White* hath offered something by way of answer, I shall here consider it. He tells us*, *That the plea of the Greek Church is Non-Tradition, alledging only this, That their Fathers do not deliver the Doctrine of the proceſſion of the Holy Ghost; not that they say the contrary, which clearly demonstrates there are no opposite Traditions between them and us.* But this was not the thing Mr. *White* was concerned to do, to demonstrate there were no opposite Traditions between the *Greeks* and the *Latines*, but to secure his main Demonstration of the impossibility of Traditions failing against this *Instance*. For that the *Greeks* have no such Tradition as this, *That the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son*, is as good an evidence of the failure of Tradition as if they had a positive Tradition, *That he proceeds only from the Father*; especially if we consider that
they

they * charge the Latin Church with *Innovation* in this matter, and say that the addition of that Clause, *of the Procession from the Son also*, is a corruption of the ancient Faith, and a Devilish Invention. Why then does Mr. *White* go about to baffle so material an Objection (and, I fear, his own Conscience likewise) by a pitiful Evasion instead of a solid Answer? What though there be no *opposite Traditions* between the *Greek* and *Latin* Church, yet if their Faith be opposite, Will it not from hence follow that Tradition hath failed in one of them? I wonder that Mr. *White*, who hath so very well confuted the Infallibility of Popes and Councils, and thereby undermined the very Foundations of that Religion, should not by the same light of Reason discover the fondness of his own Opinion concerning the Infallibility of Oral Tradition, which hath more and greater absurdities in it than that which he confutes. And to shew Mr. *White* the absurdity of it, I will apply his Demonstration of the Infallibility of *Christian* Tradition in general, to the *Greek* Church in particular; by which every one will see that

* Phoc. Ep. 7.

* De Fid. &
Theol. Tract. 1.
Sect. 4.

that it does as strongly prove the impossibility of Traditions failing in the Greek Church, as in the Roman-Catholick, as they are pleased to call it. His Demonstration is this*, *Christ commanded his Apostles to preach to all the World, and lest any one should doubt of the effect, he sent his Spirit into them to bring to their remembrance what he had taught them; which Spirit did not only give them a power to do what he inclined them to, but did cause them actually to do it.* I cannot but take notice by the way of the ill consequence of this, which is, that men may doubt, whether those who are to teach the Doctrine of Christ, will remember it, and teach it to others, unless they have that extraordinary and efficacious assistance of the Holy Ghost which the Apostles had; if this be true, his Demonstration is at an end, for he cannot plead that this assistance hath been continued ever since the Apostles. He proceeds, *The Apostles preached this Doctrine; the Nations understood it, lived according to it, and valued it as that which was necessary to them and their Posterity incomparably beyond any thing else.* All this

this I suppose done to, and by the *Greeks* as well as any other Nation. *These things being put, it cannot enter into any mans understanding, but that the Christian [Greeks] of the first Age, being the scholars of the Apostles, could and would earnestly commend the Christian Doctrine to their Posterity; if so, it is evident that they did. So that the continuance of the purity of the Faith in the [Greek] Church is founded upon this, That Fathers always delivered the same Doctrine to their Children which they had received from their Fathers, and did believe it under this very Notion and Title as received; nor could any one [of that Church] deliver another Doctrine under this Title, but he would be convinced of a Lye by the rest; and if the whole [Greek] Church should endeavour to deliver a new Doctrine under that Title, [and there's the same reason if they should leave out any Article of the old Doctrine] that whole Age would be in their Consciences condemned of perfidiousness and parricide. Now this is as impossible as it is that all Mankind should conspire to kill themselves. And he afterwards * gives the reason why it is so.*

* Ibid. Sect. 5.

impossible that Tradition should fail, and it is a very bold and saucy one, *That if the Tradition of the Christian Faith be not more firm than the course of the Sun and Moon, and the propagation of Mankind, then God hath shewn himself an unskilful Artificer.* What is there in all this Demonstration, which may not be accommodated to the *Greek Church* with as much force and advantage as to the *Catholick*? Unless he can shew that it is very possible that all the Men in *Greece* may conspire to kill themselves, but yet absolutely impossible that all the Men in the World should do so; which I am sure he cannot shew, unless he can demonstrate, that though it be possible for a Million, of as wise Men as any are to be found in the World together, to conspire to do a foolish action, yet it is impossible that an Hundred millions not one jot wiser than the other, should agree together to the doing of it.

§. 4. From all this it appears, That *Mr. White's* Answer to this Objection, doth not signifie any thing to his purpose. For if the *Procession of the Holy Ghost* was part of *Christs Doctrine*, then

then it was delivered by the Apostles to the Greek Church ; if so, they could not fail to deliver it down to the next Age, and that to the next, and so on ; but it seems they have failed. Where then *is the force of hopes and fears strongly applied ? Where are the certain Causes of actual Will to adhere to this Doctrine ?* Why is not the effect produced, *the Causes being put actually causing ?* If the Apostles delivered this Doctrine, Oral Tradition is so clear and *unmistakable*, and * *brings down Faith* * P: 53. & 54. *clad in such plain matters of Fact, that the most stupid man living* (much less the Greeks, that were the flower of Mankind) *could not possibly be ignorant of it ; nay **, it exceeds all the power of * Ibid. *Nature to blot Knowledges thus fixt out of the Soul of one single Believer* (much more out of so vast a Church) And * * P. 78. *since no man can hold contrary to his knowledg, or doubt of what he holds, nor change and innovate without knowing he did so, 'tis a manifest impossibility, a whole Church should in any Age fall into an absurdity so inconsistent with the nature of one single man.* And * *since* * P. 86. *'tis natural for every man to speak Truth,*

* P. 89.

and Grace is to perfect Nature in whatever is good in it, it follows that one truly Christian heart is far more fixt to Veracity, than others not imbued with these heavenly Tenets; and consequently that a multitude of such must incomparably exceed in point of testifying the same number of others, unfortified by Christs Doctrine. And since * such a thought cannot enter into the most depraved Nature, as to harm another without any good to himself, and yet this must be if we put Christian Fathers misteaching their Children unreceived Doctrines for received (and I hope for the same reason, received Doctrines for unreceived) contrary to their knowledg. For supposing Sanctity in the (Greek) Church (and why may we not as well as in the Latin) That is, that multitudes in it make Heaven their first love, and look on spiritual goods as their main concern, &c. it follows, that had the Fathers of that Church in any Age consented to mislead their Posterity from what themselves (not only) conceived (but knew) to be true, they should do the most extream harm imaginable to others without any the least good to themselves;

selves; which is perhaps impossible in one single man, more in few, but infinitely in a multitude, especially of good men.

§. 5. Thus I might apply the rest of his Ranting Rhetorick (but that I am weary of Transcribing it) concerning * *the natural love of Parents to their* * P. 90, 91. *Children* (unless we suppose the Greek Church destitute of it) which must needs engage them to use the means proper to bring them to Heaven, and save them from Hell: As also concerning *the natural care men have of not losing their Credit by telling pernicious Eyes.* And, not to omit the best part of his Demonstration * (which was there- * P. 93. fore prudently reserved to the last place) I might likewise shew *how the Principles of each Science, Arithmetick, Geometry, Logick, Nature, Morality, Historical Prudence, Politicks, Metaphysicks, Divinity,* and last of all the new Science of *Controversse* (as he calls it) or the blessed Art of Eternal wrangling and disputing (*the first Principle* whereof (he tells us) is, *That Tradition is certain*) do all contribute to shew the certainty of Tradition, that is, the impossibility that any part of Christs

Doctrine should fail in the *Greek Church* any more than in the *Latin*. And surely *Arithmetick*, *Geometry*, *Logic*, *Natural Philosophy*, *Metaphysicks*, &c. will all stand up for the *Greek Church* in this quarrel; for considering that *Greece* was the place where the *Arts* and *Sciences* were born and bred, it is not to be imagined that they should be so disingenuous and unnatural, as not to contribute their best assistance to the service of their Countrey.

§. 6. But it may be the *Greeks* cannot so justly pretend to Oral Tradition as the *Latins*. What if *St. Peter*, the Head of the Apostles, thought fit to share Scripture and Tradition between these two Churches, and laying his left hand on the *Greek Church*, and his right on the *Latin*, was pleased to confer the great blessing of Oral Tradition upon the *Latin Church*? which being to be the seat of Infallibility, it was but fitting that she should be furnish'd with this infallible way of conveying the Christian Doctrine. And therefore it may be, that as the *Scriptures* of the New Testament were left in *Greek*, so Oral Tradition was delivered down only in *Latin*.

tin. This I confess is not altogether without some shew of reason: Mr. S. may do well to take the matter into his deeper consideration; he hath in his time improved as weak probabilities as these into lusty Demonstrations. And if he could but demonstrate this, it would very much weaken the force of this *Instance* of the *Greek Church*; otherwise (for ought I see) this *Instance* will hold good against *him*; and whatever he can say for the impossibility of Tradition's failing in the *Latin Church*, may all be said of the *Greek Church*, if he will but grant that the Apostles preached the same Doctrine to them both; that the arguments of hope and fear which this Doctrine contains in it, were applied as strongly to the *Greeks* as the *Latins*. And yet notwithstanding all this, Tradition hath plainly failed in the *Greek Church*. Let him now assign the Age wherein so vast a number of men conspired to leave out the *Article* of the *Procession of the Holy Ghost*; and shew how it was possible a whole Age could conspire together to damn their Posterity; or how the Faith of immediate Fore-fathers might

be altered without any such Conspiracy; and we are ready to satisfy him how the Doctrine of the *Latin Church* might be corrupted and altered, and to tell him punctually in what Age it was done. And until he do this, I would entreat him to trouble us no more with those canting questions (wherein yet the whole force of his Demonstration lies) How is it possible a whole Age should conspire to change the Doctrine of their Fore-fathers? And in what Age was this done? For if it be reasonable to demand of us, in order to the overthrowing of his Demonstration, to assign the particular Age wherein the *Latin Church* conspired to change the ancient Doctrine; with the same reason we require of him, in order to the maintaining of his Demonstration, to name the particular Age wherein the *Greek Church* conspired to alter the Doctrine of Christ (which was undoubtedly in the first Age truly delivered to them by the Apostles) and also to shew from the rational force and strength of Tradition, how it is more impossible for the *whole Church* to have failed in transmitting the Doctrine of Christ down to us,
or

or to have conspired to the altering of it, than for such a multitude of Christians as is the vast body of the *Greek Church*. If Mr. S. or Mr. *White* shew this, they do something; otherwise, I must tell them, that unless they can manage these *pretty things* they call *Demonstrations* better, they must shortly either quit their Reason, or their Religion; or else return to the honest old *Mumpsimus* of the Infallibility of the Church from an extraordinary and immediate assistance of the Holy Ghost; or (to make the business short, and stop all gaps with one Bush) come over to the *Jesuites*, and acknowledg the *Popes Infallibility* both in matters of *Faith* and *Fact*; by which means they may reconcile themselves to *him*, and prevent that direful stroke which threatens them from *Rome*, and is ready to cut them off from the Body of the *Traditionary Church*. And thus I have done with his *First Demonstration*; and I take it for a good sign that the Popish Cause is at a very low ebb, when such *stuff* as this must be called *Demonstration*.

SECT. VI.

Mr. S's Demonstration a
posteriori.

§. 1. **I** Come now to his *Demonstration a Posteriori*, which although it fall of it self if the *Demonstration a Priori* fail; yet because it hath some peculiar absurdities of its own, I shall consider it by it self as well as with relation to the other.

§. 2. Before he comes to lay it down with the *Grounds* of it, according to his usual fashion, he premiseth something as yielded by Protestants which, in his sense, no Protestant ever granted. Just so he dealt with us before concerning the Scriptures, saying, That by them the Protestants *must mean unsensed Letters and Characters*. But let us see what it is. * *That this Demonstration a Posteriori, seems a needless endeavour against the Protestants, who yield that those Points in which we agree, as the Trinity, Incarnation, &c. came down by this way of Tradition; And this (he saith) no Protestant ever denied. And then he asks. Whether the same vertue of Tradition would not have been as powerful to bring down other Points in which we*

* P. 76.

we do not agree, had any such been?
 Now if he speak any thing to his own purpose, he must suppose Protestants to yield, that all those Points wherein we are agreed, were conveyed down to us solely by Oral Tradition without Writing: But this all Protestants deny. So that, that only which would avail his Cause against us, is to shew, that those Points wherein we differ, have not only come down to us by Oral Teaching, but that they are likewise contained in Scripture, without which, we say, we can have no sufficient certainty and assurance at this distance, that they were the Doctrine of Christ, and that they were not either totally innovated, or else corrupted in the conveyance from what they were at first. And if he can shew this concerning any Point in difference, I promise to yield it to him.

§. 3. I come now to his *Demonstration*, which I shall set down in his own words with the *Principles* upon which it relies. * *The effect then we will pitch* * p. 77, 78.
upon, and avow to be the proper one of such a cause, is the present perswasion of Traditionary Christians (or Catholicks) that their Faith hath descended from Christ

Christ and his Apostles uninterruptedly, which we find most firmly rooted in their heart; and the existence of this persuasion we affirm to be impossible without the existence of Traditions ever indeficiency to beget it. To prove this, I lay this first Principle; That Age, which holds her Faith thus delivered from the Apostles, neither can it self have changed any thing in it, nor know or doubt that any Age since the Apostles had changed or innovated therein. The second Principle shall be this. No Age could innovate any thing, and withall deliver that very thing to Posterity as received from Christ by continual succession. The Sum of which is this, That because a present multitude of Christians (viz. the Roman Church) are perswaded, that Christ's Doctrine hath descended to them solely by an uninterrupted Oral Tradition, therefore this persuasion is an effect which cannot be attributed to any other cause but the indeficiency of Oral Tradition. For if neither the present Age, nor any Age before, could make any change or innovation, then the persuasion of the present Age is a plain Demonstration that this Doctrine was always the same,

same, and consequently that Tradition cannot fail.

§. 4. In answer to this, I shall endeavour to make good these *four* things.

First, That these *Principles* wholly rely upon the Truth of the *Grounds* of his *Demonstration a Priori*.

Secondly, That these *Principles* are not sufficiently proved by him.

Thirdly, That *Doctrines* and *Practises*, which must be acknowledged to have been innovated, have made the same pretence to uninterrupted Tradition.

Fourthly, That it is not the present perswasion of the Church of *Rome*, (whom he calls the *Traditionary Christians*) nor ever was, that their Faith hath descended to them solely by Oral Tradition. If I can now make good these *four* things, I hope his *Demonstration* is at an end.

SECT. VII.

The First Answer to his second Demonstration.

§. I. **T**Hat these Principles wholly rely upon the truth of the *Grounds* of his *Demonstration a Priori*. For if the Doctrine of Christ was either imperfectly taught in any Age, or mistaken by the Learners, or any part of it forgotten (as it seems the whole *Greek Church* have forgot that fundamental Point of the *Procession of the Holy Ghost*, as the *Roman Church* accounts it) or if the Arguments of hope and fear be not necessary causes of actual will to adhere to Tradition; then there may have been changes and innovations in any Age, and yet men may pretend to have followed Tradition. But I have shewn, that Ignorance, and Negligence, and Mistake, and Pride, and Lust, and Ambition, and any other Vice or Interest, may hinder those causes from being effectual to preserve Tradition entire and uncorrupted. And when they do so, it is not to be expected that those Persons, who innovate and change the Doctrine, should acknowledg that their new Doctrines are contrary

rary to the Doctrine of Christ; but that they should at first advance them as Pious, and after they have prevailed and gained general entertainment, then impudently affirm that they were the very Doctrines which Christ delivered; which they may very securely do, when they have it in their power to burn all that shall deny it.

§. 2. I will give a clear *Instance* of the possibility of this in the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, by shewing how this might easily come in, in the Ninth or Tenth Age after Christ. We will suppose then that about this time, when universal Ignorance, and the genuine Daughter of it (call her Devotion or Superstition) had overspread the World, and the generality of People were strongly enclined to believe strange things; and even the greatest Contradictions were recommended to them under the notion of Mysteries, being told by their Priests and Guides, that the more contradictory any thing is to Reason, the greater merit there is in believing it: I say, let us suppose, that in this state of things, one or more of the most eminent then in the Church,
either

either out of design, or out of superstitious ignorance and mistake of the sense of our Saviour's words used in the Consecration of the Sacrament, should advance this new Doctrine, That the words of Consecration, *This is my Body*, are not to be understood by any kind of *Trope* (as the like forms in Scripture are, as *I am the Vine*, *I am the Door*, which are plain *Tropes*) but being used about this great Mystery of the Sacrament ought in all reason to be supposed to contain in them some notable Mystery; which they will do, if they be understood of a real change of the substance of Bread and Wine, made by vertue of these words, into the real Body and Blood of our Saviour. And in all this, I suppose nothing but what is so far from being impossible, that it is too usual, for men either out of Ignorance or Interest, to advance new Opinions in Religion. And such a Doctrine as this was very likely to be advanced by the ambitious *Clergy* of that time, as a probable means to draw in the People to a greater veneration of them; which advantage Mr. *Rushworth* * seems to be very sensible of, when he tells us, That the
power

* Dial. 1.
Sect. 4.

power of the Priest in this particular, is such a priviledg, as if all the learned Clerks that ever lived since the beginning of the World, should have studied to raise, advance, and magnifie some one state of men to the highest pitch of Reverence and Eminency, they could never (without special light from Heaven) have thought of any thing comparable to this. I am of his mind, that it was a very notable device, but (I am apt to think) invented without any special light from Heaven. Nor was such a Doctrine less likely to take and prevail among the People in an Age prodigiously ignorant, and strongly enclined to Superstition, and thereby well prepared to receive the grossest Absurdities under the notion of Mysteries; especially if they were such as might seem to conciliate a greater honour and reverence to the Sacrament. Now supposing such a Doctrine as this, so fitted to the humor and temper of the Age, to be once asserted, either by chance, or out of design; it would take like wild-fire: especially if by some one or more who bore sway in the Church, it were but recommended with convenient gravity

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and

* Dial. 3.
Sect. 7.

and solemnity. And although Mr. *Rushworth* says *, It is *impossible* that the *Authority* of one man should sway so much in the World, because (sayes he) *surely the Devil himself would rather help the Church, than permit so little pride among men*; yet I am not so thoroughly satisfied with this cunning reason: For though he delivers it confidently, and with a *surely*, yet I make some doubt whether the Devil would be so forward to help the Church; nay, on the contrary, I am enclined to think that he would rather choose to connive at this humble and obsequious temper in men, in order to the overthrow of Religion, than cross a design so dear to him by unseasonable temptations to pride: So that notwithstanding Mr. *Rushworth's* reason, it seems very likely that such a Doctrine, in such an Age, might easily be propagated by the influence and authority of one or a few great Persons in the Church. For nothing can be more suitable to the easie and passive temper of superstitious Ignorance, than to entertain such a Doctrine with all imaginable greediness, and to maintain it with a proportionable

ble zeal. And if there be any wiser than the rest, who make Objections against it as if this Doctrine were new and full of contradictions, they may easily be born down by the stream, and by the eminency and authority and pretended sanctity of those who are the heads of this Innovation. And when this Doctrine is generally swallowed, and all that oppose it are looked upon and punished as Hereticks, then it is seasonable to maintain that this Doctrine was the doctrine of forefathers; to which end it will be sufficient to those who are willing to have it true, to bend two or three sayings of the Ancients to that purpose. And as for the contradictions contained in this Doctrine, it was but telling the People then (as they do in effect now) that contradictions ought to be no scruple in the way of Faith: that the more impossible any thing is, 'tis the fitter to be believed: that it is not praise-worthy to believe plain possibilities, but that this is the gallantry and heroical power of Faith, this is the way to oblige God Almighty for ever to us, to believe flat and down-right contradic-

* Dial. 1.
Sect. 4.

tions: For *God requires at the Peoples hands* (as Mr. *Rusworth* * tells us) *a Credulity of things above and beyond Nature; nay, beyond all the Fables, be it spoken with respect, that ever man invented.* After this Doctrine hath proceeded thus far, and by the most inhumane severities and cruelties suppressed Dissenters, or in a good measure rooted them out; then if they please even this new word *Transubstantiation* may pretend also to Antiquity, and in time be confidently vouched for a word used by Christians in all Ages, and transmitted down to them by those from whom they received the Doctrine of the Sacrament, as *a term of Art* appendant to it. And when a superstitious Church and designing Governors have once gained this Post, and by means of this enormous Article of *Transubstantiation* have sufficiently debauched the minds of men, and made a breach in their understandings wide enough for the entertaining of any Error, though never so gross and senseless; then Innovations come in again, and by sholes; and the more absurd and unreasonable any thing is, it is, for that very rea-

reason the more proper matter for an Article of Faith. And if any of these Innovations be objected against, as contrary to former belief and practice, it is but putting forth a lusty act of Faith, and believing another contradiction, that though they be contrary yet they are the same.

§. 3. And there is nothing in all this, but what is agreeable both to History and Experience. For that the Ninth and Tenth Ages, and those which followed them till the Reformation, were thus prodigiously ignorant and superstitious, is confirmed by the unanimous consent of all Historians; and even by those Writers, that have been the greatest Pillars of their own Religion. And Experience tells us, that in what Age soever there are a great company of superstitious People, there will never be wanting a few crafty Fellows to make use of this easie and pliable humor to their own ends. Now that this was the state of those Ages of the Church, will be evident to any from these Testimonies. *Platina* * writes of Pope *Romanus*, that he null'd the Acts of his Predecessor *Stephanus*; For (sayes he)

* In Vit.
Romani.
Pagæ 117.
A. C. 900.

*these Popes minded nothing else but how they might extinguish both the Name and Dignity of their Predecessors. And if so, who can doubt, but that these Popes who made it their business to destroy the very memory of their Ancestors, would be very little careful to preserve the Doctrine of Fore-fathers. But what the care of those Times was in this particular, may be conjectured from what Onuphrius * says by way of confutation of that passage in Platina, concerning Pope Joan's reading publickly at Rome at her first coming thither. This (says he) is utterly false, for there was nothing that they were less solicitous about in those Times, than to furnish the City with any publick Teachers. And the time which Onuphrius speaks of, was much about the beginning of the Tenth Century. Phil. Bergomensis * says, It happened in that Age through the slothfulness of men, that there was a general decay of Vertue both in the Head and Members. Again *, These Times through the Ambition and cruel Tyranny of the Popes were extremely unhappy — For the Popes setting aside the fear of God and his Worship, fell in-*

* In Platin.

* Anno 506.

* Anno 9. 8.

to such enmities among themselves, as cruel Tyrants exercise towards one another. Sabellicus * says, *It is wonderful to observe what a strange forgetfulness of all Arts did about this time seize upon men; insomuch that neither the Popes, nor other Princes seem'd to have any sense or apprehension of any thing that might be useful to humane life. There were no wholesome Laws, no Reparations of Churches, no pursuit of liberal Arts; but a kind of stupidity and madness and forgetfulness of manners had possessed the minds of men. And a little after, I cannot (says he) but much wonder, from whence these Tragical Examples of Popes should spring; and how their minds should come to be so devoid of all Piety, as neither to regard the Person which they sustained, nor the place they were in. Sigonius * speaking of these Times, about the beginning of the Tenth Century, calls them the foulest and blackest, both in respect of the wickedness of Princes, and the madness of the People, that are to be found in all Antiquity. Genebrard * speaking of the same Time, This (says he) is called the unhappy Age; being destitute of men*

* Ennead. 9.

L. I. Anno.

900.

* De Regn.

Ital. L. 6.

* Chron. L. 4.

*eminent for Wit and Learning, as also of famous Princes and Popes. In this Time there was scarce any thing done worthy to be remembred by Posterity. And he adds afterwards, But chiefly unhappy in this one thing, that for almost 150 years together, about 50 Popes, did utterly degenerate from the vertue of their Ancestors. He should have added further, but even to a miracle happy in another respect, that during this long and total degeneracy from the Piety and Vertue of their Ancestors, they did not in the least swerve from them in matter of Faith and Doctrine: A thing incredible, were there not Demonstration for it. Werner * gives this Character of that Time; About the year of our Lord One Thousand, there began an effeminate Time, in which the Christian Faith begun to degenerate exceedingly, and to decline from its ancient vigour; inso-much that in many Countries of Christendom, neither Sacraments nor Ecclesiastical Rites were observed—And people were given to Soothsaying and Witchcrafts, and the Priest was like the People. It seems by this Testimony, that Tradition did falter a little in that Age, else the*

* Fascic. Tempor.
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Se&t. 7. of FAITH.

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the *Christian Faith* could not possibly have degenerated and declined so very much: And (which threatens Mr. s's Demonstration most of all) that the *Practical Tradition of Sacraments*, and other *Ecclesiastical Observances* did fail in many *Christian Countries*. Gerbert *, * Epist. 40. who lived in that Time, gives this short Character of the *Roman Church*, in an Epistle of his to *Stephen Deacon* of that Church; *The World stands amazed at the Manners of Rome*. But most full is the complaint of a great Prelate of the Church * concerning those Times; * Bell. Sacr. In the West (says he) and almost all L. 1. c. 8. the World over (especially among those who were called the Faithful) Faith failed, and there was no fear of God among them: (it seems the Argument of Fear had lost its force) Justice was perished from among men, and violence prevailing against equity governed the Nations. Fraud, Deceit, and the Arts of Couzenage were grown universal. All kind of Vertue gave way as an useless thing, and wickedness supply'd its place. The World seemed to be declining apace towards its Evening, and the second coming of the Son of man to draw near:

For

For Love was grown cold, and Faith was not found upon Earth. All things were in Confusion, and the World looked as if it would return to its old Chaos. — All sorts of Fornication were committed with the same freedom as if they had been lawful Actions; for men neither blushed at them, nor were punish't for them. — Nor did the Clergy live better than the People. — For the Bishops were grown negligent of the Duty of their place, &c. In a word, men ran themselves headlong into all Vice, and all Flesh had corrupted its way. And farther to shew the great neglect of Priests and Bishops in the work of Teaching and Instruction (which is so necessary to the preserving of Tradition inviolable) I will add the Testimony of one * who lived in those Times; who tells us, *That in those days, the Priests and Bishops, who ought to have been the Pillars of the Church, were so negligent that they did not mind the Divine Scripture; nor take any care to teach and instruct Scholars that might succeed them, as we read holy Men had used to do, who left many Scholars perfectly instructed to be their Successors. If they had only neglected the Scriptures,*

* Elfric. Serm.
ad Sacerdot.

tures, all might have been well enough; but it seems they took no care to instruct people in the way of *Oral Tradition*, nor to furnish the Church with a new Generation of able Teachers who might deliver down from hand to hand the sense and faith of Fore-fathers. This last Testimony, the late Learned Lord Primate of Ierland, Bishop Usher (in his Book *De Christian. Eccles. Success.* &c. * where several of the Testimo- * C. 2. & 3. nies I have produced, with many more to the same purpose, may be seen) cites out of a *M. S.* in Bennet Colledg Library in *Cambridg*; concerning the authority of which *M. S.* there need be no dispute between *Mr. S.* and me; because the whole force and effect of this Testimony is sufficiently contained in those Citations which I have brought out of publick and unquestionable Books.

§. 4. All these Testimonies which I have produced are, in general and for the substance of them, confirmed by Two of the greatest Props of the *Romish Church*; *Bellarmino*, and *Baronius*. *Bellarmino* * says of this Tenth Age, * De Rom. Pontif. L. 4. C. 12. That there was never any either more unlearned, or more unhappy. *Baronius* speaks

* Annal. Tom.
10. Anno 900.

* speaks more particularly, *What was then the face of the Roman Church? How deformed? When Whores, no less powerful than vile, bore the chief sway at Rome; and at their pleasure changed Sees, appointed Bishops; and (which it is horrible to mention) did thrust into St. Peters See their own Gallants, false-Popes, who would not have been mentioned in the Catalogue of the Roman Popes, but only for the more distinct Recording of so long a Succession of Times. And a little after, Christ was then (it seems) in a very deep sleep—And which was worse; when the Lord was thus asleep there were no Disciples to awaken him, being themselves all fast asleep. What kind of Cardinal Presbyters and Deacons can we think were chosen by these Monsters, when nothing is so natural as for every one to propagate his own likeness? It is very much that these lewd Women, and their Favourite-Popes, Cardinals, and Bishops who then swayed the Church, should, when they were so careless of their own Souls, be so tender of the salvation of Posterity; and, when they administered all other affairs of the Church so extravagantly, should be*

be so careful of the *main chance*, as to transmit the Christian Doctrine entire and uncorrupted to succeeding Ages. Yet Mr. S. hath demonstrated this *a Posteriori*, which seems so very strange to a man that considers things *a Priori*.

§. 5. But it may be, this dismal state of the *Roman Church* lasted but a little while; and she did in the same Age, before Tradition could be interrupted, recover her self out of this degenerate condition. I will therefore enquire a little into the state of succeeding Times. And I find in the Thirteenth Century, St. Bernard* complaining, That the degeneracy of the Priests was in his days greater than ever; *We cannot* (says he) *now say, as is the People so is the Priest; for the People are not so bad as their Priests.* In the Fifteenth Century, Nic. de Clemangiis, who lived in that Time, wrote a Book upon this argument, *Of the corrupt state of the Church*; by which we may make some judgment whether in that Age it was (as Mr. S. says) impossible but that the Christian Doctrine should be entirely preserved, and faithfully and diligently taught. He says* there was an uni-
versal

* In Convers.
Sancti Pauli.
Serm. 1.

* C. 3.

versal degeneracy in the Church, from the very Head of it to its lowest Members. In the same Chapter he complains, *Who is there that preaches the Gospel to the People? Who shews them the way to Salvation either by Word or Action?* It seems there was a great failure both of Oral and Practical Tradition. Again *, speaking of the Pope's taking to himself the Collation of all vacant Bishopricks and Dignities; he says, one might think the Pope did this, *that the Church might be provided of worthier Governors, both in respect of their Learning, and their lives, did not the thing it self declare the contrary, and that ignorant and useless Persons (provided they had money) were by Simony advanced to the highest degrees in the Church.* And *, speaking what a vast number of Candidates there was usually at Rome from all Parts waiting for Benefices and Dignities, he tells us, That many of these did not come from their Studies, or from Schools of Learning, to govern Parishes; but from the Plow, and from the meanest Professions: and that they understood Latin and Arabick much at the same rate; and many of them could not read at all.

But

* C. 5.

* C. 6.

But it may be (says he) their manners were such as might be some excuse for their Ignorance. No; though their Learning was but little, their Vertue was less; for being brought up in Idleness, they followed nothing but Debauchery and Sports, &c. Hence it comes to pass, that in all places there are so many wicked, and wretched, and ignorant Priests—Hence it is that Priests are so contemned by the common People—Formerly the Priesthood was highly honoured by the People, and nothing was more venerable than that Order of men; but now nothing is more vile and despicable.—* I make * C. 9.
no doubt, but there are now more Thieves and Robbers, than true Pastors in the Church.—* Why should any man now * C. 11.
flatter himself with hopes of Preferment, because of his Vertue or Learning? Men do not now (as formerly) rise in the Church by such Arts—* Which of * C. 13.
those that are now adays advanced to the Pontifical Dignity, hath so much as perfunctorily read, or heard, or learnt the Scriptures; yea, or ever touched any more than the cover of the Bible? Again *, speaking of the prodigious * C. 14.
Covetousness of the Governors of the Church,

Church, and the gross neglect of their Flocks, They would (says he) much more contentedly bear the loss of ten thousand Souls, than of ten or twelve Shillings. But why do I say more contentedly? When without the least trouble or disturbance to themselves, they can bear the loss of Souls; a thing so far from their care, that it never entred into their thoughts. Had the Hereticks of those days but had Wit enough, and a little Money, they might (it seems) for a small Sum have hired the Governors of the Church to have renounced Tradition, or to have ceased to propagate it; though they had known that in so doing they should have damned all their Posterity. He goes on, and tells us, That if there were perhaps any one who did not take these courses, the rest would all snarle at him, call him Fool, and say he was unfit to be a Priest. — So that the study of the Scriptures (together with the Professors of it) was turned into laughter and scorn by all; but (which is prodigious) especially by the Popes, who prefer their own Traditions many degrees before the Commands of God. I desire Mr. S. to take notice in what kind of

of Times *Tradition* was set up against Scripture. Again *, speaking of the choice of persons to be Priests, he tells us, *That there was no enquiry made into their Lives, no question about their Manners: As for their Learning* (says he) *what need I speak of that? When we see the Priests, almost universally, have much ado to read, though but in an hesitating and spelling fashion, drawing out one syllable after another, without understanding either the sense of what they read, or the words.* I am now reconciled to oral *Tradition*, and convinced that there was great need of it in those Ages in which scarce any of the Priests could either write or read. I omit the particulars of what he says * con- * C. 20, 21, cerning the common Drunkenness and Incontinency of Priests, who (because they made Conscience of Marriage) kept Whores in their Houses; concerning the dissolute Lives of Minks; and concerning Nunneries, which instead of being the Sanctuaries of God, were abominable Stews of Venus, and the Receptacles of lascivious young men; insomuch (says he) that at this day it is the same thing to put a Virgin into a

Q Nunnery,

* C. 25.

Nunnery, and to make her a common Strumpet. And to shew that he does not speak these things of a few, but with relation to the general corruption of that Age, he adds *, *That wickedness did so abound in all Orders of men, that scarce one among a thousand was to be found who did truly live up to his Profession: And if there was any one that did not follow these lewd courses, he became ridiculous to others, and was branded either as an insolent singular Mad-man, or an Hypocrite.*

* C. 27.

I wil conclude this long Testimony with the character which he gives * of one of the Popes of his time, *Clement* by name, viz. *That he did chiefly apply himself to gratifie and oblige all the Parasites and Buffoons that had any interest in the severall Courts of Princes: And to this end, did confer upon these, and upon handsom young Boys (which he much delighted in) almost all the vacant Bishopricks, and most of the other Church-Dignities.* It is well that oral Tradition hath the security of *Infallibility*, otherwise it had in all probability been lost among this lewd sort of People, which yet they gravely call the *Holy Roman-Catholick Church.*

§ 6. To

§ 6. To this effect I might have produced Testimonies concerning every Age from the *Ninth* to the *Sixteenth*; but Mr. Cressy hath saved me that labour, who acknowledges *, that *these worst times of the Church, when Ignorance, Wordliness, Pride, Tyranny, &c. reigned with so much scope: When the Popes (so wicked, so abominable in their Lives) enjoyed so unlimited a power even over secular Princes themselves, and much more over the Clergy: I say, he acknowledges that these worst times continued during the space of about six Ages before Luther: A competent time (one would think) for Tradition to have miscarried in, were it not (as Mr. S. says) indefectible. Mr. Cressy indeed tells us *, That this was to him an irrefragable Testimony of a strange watchfulness of Divine Providence over the Church, to preserve it from the Gates of Hell (that is, established and dangerous Errors) during these worst times. And very likely it is that this might appear so to such a Catholick whose judgment, he tells us, it is to renounce his own judgment: but it will never appear irrefragable, to any man that hath his judgment*

* Exomolog. C. 68.

* Ibid.

about him, unless Mr. *Cressy* can prove, that by that phrase, *viz. the Gates of Hell*, the Scripture does not mean gross wickedness of Life, as well as *dangerous errors* in Opinion; and likewise, that a general viciousness and debauchery of Manners is not as pernicious to Christianity, and as destructive to the end of it, as *establish'd Errors* in Doctrine: And if so, that the Providence of God is not equally concerned to preserve the Church from things equally pernicious. When he hath proved these three things, then this Declamatory discourse of his may signify something, but not before.

§ 7. Now if this be a true representation of the state of the *Roman Church* in those Ages, was not this a very fit time for the Devil to play his Pranks in? Will any man that reads these Testimonies, think it impossible that the Doctrine of Christ should have been depraved in this Age; or that the most senseless and absurd Tenets might then be brought in under the notion of Christian Doctrines? When scarce any one knew what the Doctrine of Christ was: When a general ignorance of Letters,

and

and almost an universal stupidity and madness had seized upon the minds of men: When there was a horrid depravation of manners, and a general failure of Vertue and Piety both in the Head and Members of the Church: When the lives of the Popes were Tragically wicked, and no footsteps of Piety appeared in them: When for about 150 years together, in a continued succession of 50 Popes, there was scarce one pious and vertuous Man (or Woman) sat in that Chair: When the *Whores* governed *Rome*, and put out, and put in Bishops at their pleasure; and made their own *Gallants* Popes, who would be sure to make a Colledge of Cardinals of such Monsters as themselves: When *pretty Boys*, and *Parasites*, and *Buffoons* led the Head of the Church by the Nose, and were gratified with the best Bishopricks and Dignities in the Church: When there was a general decay of knowledg, and defection of the Christian Faith: When in many Countreys neither Sacraments, nor other Ecclesiastical Rites were observed: When Violence and Fraud, and all the Arts of Deceit and Couzenage, and

* Dial. 3.
Sect. 3.

blackest Arts than these, were the common study and practice ; When Intemperance, and all kind of Lewdness and Debauchery, reigned in all sorts and orders of men : When the generality of Bishops and Priests (who, according to Mr. *Rusworth**, can only teach the Traditionary Doctrine) were ignorant in the Scriptures and in every thing else (very few of them being able so much as to read tolerably) and did neglect to teach the People, and to breed up any in knowledge to succeed them in their Office ; and in the lewdness of their lives did surpass the vilest of the People. Was not such an Age a fit season to plant the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* in ? Or if any thing more monstrous than that can be imagined, it might then have taken place ; for what Weeds would not have grown in so rank a Soyl ? Doth Mr. *S.* think it impossible, that those that were born in the Church then, should be ignorant of the Doctrine of Christ, when scarce any one would take the pains to teach it them ; or that it could then have been altered, when so few understood, and fewer practised it : When prodigious

ous Impiety and Wickedness did overspread the Church, from the Pope down to the meanest of the Laity, can any one believe that men generally made Conscience to instruct their Children in the true Faith of Christ? Was it impossible there should be any neglect of this Duty, when all others failed? That there should be any mistake about the Doctrine of Christ, when there was so much Ignorance? unless he be of Mr. *Rushworth's* * mind, who reckons *Ignorance among the Parents of Religion.* * Dial. 3. Sect. 7.

Where were then the *Arguments of Hope and Fear*? Were they *strongly applied*, or were they not? Were they *causes of actual will* in Christians to believe well, when they lived so ill? Or is Christianity only fitted to form mens minds to a right belief, but of no efficacy to govern their lives? Hath Christ taken care to keep his Church from Error, but not from Vice? As the great Cardinal *Perron* * (stooping below his own Wit and Reason to serve a bad Cause) * Reply to K. James. L. 4. C. 6. tells us, *That the Church sings, and will sing to the end of the World, I am black, but I am fair; that is to say, I am black in Manners, but fair in Doctrine:* As if

the meaning of the Prophecies and Promises of Scripture made to the Church were this, that by the extraordinary care of Gods Providence, and peculiar assistance of his Holy Spirit, she should be wicked, but Orthodox to the end of the World. Where were then the *vigorous causes imprinting* Christ's Doctrine, and continuing it more particularly at *Rome* than any where else; and of securing that *See* and its *supreme Pastor* in the faith and practice of the Christian Doctrine, above any other *See* or Pastor whatsoever? Who is so little versed in History, as not to understand the dismal state of Religion in the *Romish* Church, in those times? Who does not know what advantages the Bishops of *Rome*, and their servile Clergy made of the ignorance and superstition of those and the succeeding Ages; and by what Arts and steps they raised themselves to that power which they held in the Church for a long while after? When they could tread upon the necks of Princes; and make a great King walk bare-foot, and yield himself to be scourged by a company of petulant Monks: When they could send a,

ny man upon an Errand to visit the holy Sepulchre, or the Shrine of such a Saint; and command five or six Kings with great Armies upon a needless expedition into the Holy Land, that so during their absence they might play their own Game the better: When they could mint Miracles, and impose upon the belief of the People (without the authority of any ancient Books) absurd and counterfeit Tales of ancient Saints and Martyrs, as delivered down to them by *Tradition*; and could bring that foppish Book the *Legend*, almost into equal Authority and Veneration with the *Bible*; and perswade the easy people that St. *Denys* carried his own head in his hand after it was cut off two miles, and kiss'd it when he laid it down. Any one that shall but reflect upon the monstrous practises of the *Roman* Bishops and Clergy in these Ages, the strange Feats they played, and what absurdities they imposed upon the superstitious credulity of Princes and People, may readily imagine not only the possibility, but the easiness of innovating new Doctrines as they pleased, under the specious pretences of Antiquity,

tiquity, and constant and uninterrupted Tradition.

* Apology
for Tradition,
p. 49.

§ 8. And this kind of Discourse concerning the possibility of Errors coming into the Church, is not, as Mr. *White* ridiculously compares it *, as if an Orator should go about to persuade people, that *George*, by the help of a long staff, and a nimble cast of his body, and such like advantages, might leap over *Paul's Steeple*; never considering all the while the disproportion of all these advantages to the height of the Steeple: so (saith he) he that discourseth at large how Errors use to slide into mans life, without comparing the power of the causes of Error to the strength of resisting, which consists in this Principle, Nothing is to be admitted but what descends by Tradition, &c. says no more towards proving an Error's over-running the Church, than the Orator for *George's* leaping over the Steeple. How vain is this? When it appears, from this Instance that I have given of the state of the *Roman Church*, in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, and afterwards; that the causes of Error were infinitely stronger than the power of resistance.

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The great causes of Error are *Ignorance* and *Vice*; where *Ignorance* reigns, there's no *Power*; where *Vice*, no *Will* to resist it. And how great the *Ignorance* and *Viciousness* of all orders of men in the *Roman Church* was, is too too apparent from the Testimonies I have brought. Where was the strength of resisting Error, when for 150 years together the Popes were the vilest of men, Bishops and Priests overwhelmed with *Ignorance*, abandoned to all manner of vice, and most supinely negligent in instructing the People? In such a degenerate state of a Church, what strength is there in this Principle, *Nothing is to be admitted but what descends by Tradition*? When those, who ought to teach men what that *Doctrine* is which was derived to them by *Tradition*, are generally careless of their *Duty*, and ignorant themselves what that *Doctrine* is; When they addict themselves wholly to the satisfying of their *Ambition*, and other *Lusts*, and carry on designs of *Gain*, and getting *Dominion* over the People. What can hinder men so disposed from corrupting the *Doctrine* of *Christ*, and suiting it to their own *Lusts* and

and Interests? And what shall hinder the People from embracing those Corruptions? when by the negligence of their Pastors to instruct them, and not only so, but also by their being deprived of the Scriptures in a known Tongue, they are become utterly incapable of knowing what the true Doctrine of Christ is. So that in an Age of such profound Ignorance and Vice, and general neglect of Instruction 'tis so far from being impossible for Errors to over-run a Church, that the contrary is morally impossible; and *George's long staff* and *advantagious cast of his Body* are more powerful causes to enable him to leap over *Paul's Steeple*, than this Principle, *That nothing is to be admitted, but what descends by Tradition*, is to keep Errors out of a Church in an ignorant and vicious Age; when few or none are either able or willing to instruct men in the Truth. For suppose this always to have been the Principle of Christians, *viz. That nothing is to be admitted as the Doctrine of Christ, but what is descended to them by Tradition*: How shall this Principle secure the Church from Heresy, any more than this,

this, viz. *That nothing but Truth is to be assented to*, doth secure men from Error? Or more than this, viz. *That no man is to do any thing but what is wise and vertuous*, does secure the generality of mankind from folly and vice?

SECT. VIII.

§ 1. **S**Econdly, The Principles upon which this Demonstration relies are not sufficiently proved by him. The second Answer to his second Demonstration.

His first Principle is this, *That Age, which holds her Faith delivered thus from the Apostles, neither can it self have changed any thing in it, nor know or doubt that any Age since the Apostles had changed or innovated any thing therein.* This Proposition (he tells us) needs no proof to evidence it, but only an Explication. For since no man can hold contrary to his knowledg, or doubt of what he holds, nor change or innovate in the case proposed without knowing he did so; 'tis a manifest impossibility a whole Age should fall into an absurdity so inconsistent with the nature of one single man. But (by his favour) that which he says is no proof,
but

but only an *Explication*, is a *proof* if it be any thing; and the force of it this; That which is *inconsistent with the nature of one single man, is manifestly impossible to a whole Age*; but it is inconsistent with the nature of any single man to hold contrary to his knowledge, &c. therefore impossible to a whole Age; and consequently, *that Age which holds her Faith delivered thus from the Apostles, neither can it self have changed any thing, nor, &c.* So that in order to the making good of this first Principle, Mr. S. hath left nothing unproved but only this Proposition, *namely, That it is impossible that any one single man that holds his Faith to have been delivered uninterruptedly from the Apostles, should either himself have changed any thing in it, or know or doubt that any Age since the Apostles hath changed or innovated any thing therein*: And to make out the truth of this Proposition, there only remains this to be proved, *viz.* That it is impossible for any single man to be mistaken. For if that be possible, then contrary to Mr. S. a man may hold that to have been delivered as a Doctrine of Faith from the Apo-

Apostles which was not so delivered.

§ 2. His second Principle is this, *That no Age could innovate any thing, and withall deliver that very thing to posterity as received from Christ by continual Succession.* He proves it thus; Since man is a rational Creature, he must have some Reason or Motive, good or bad, which he proposeth to himself as an end to be achieved by his action: And whatever his remote end is, his immediate end, in telling posterity a late invented thing was held immediately before, is to make them believe it. Wherefore since a seen impossibility cannot be a Motive to one not frantick; and since 'tis evidently impossible they should make posterity believe a thing so universally known to be false, as this must needs be, &c. it is as impossible this Principle should falter, as that the fore-going Age should conspire to act without a motive, or that the succeeding Age should believe what they know to be otherwise, that is, should hold both sides of a Contradiction in a clear matter of Fact. The force of which is this, That it is impossible that any man not frantick should attempt to innovate in matter of Christian Doctrine, because
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the immediate end of such an attempt must be to have his new Doctrine believed ; but it is impossible he should attain this end, and impossible he should not see that it is impossible to attain it. Now a seen impossibility is an end that cannot move any one that is not frantick ; therefore no man that is not frantick, can attempt to innovate in matter of Christian Doctrine. Thus he hath demonstrated it impossible that there should be any Hereticks, if a Heretick be one that attempts to innovate in matter of Christian Doctrine. For if there be any such attmpters they must be frantick, and if they be frantick they can be no Hereticks ; for Heresie implies a Crime, but God will not impute the actions of mad men to them as faults. Again, suppose he that attempts to innovate be mistaken (and I hope Mr. S. will grant that a Heretick is fallible) and think that which he delivers as Christs Doctrine to be really so, though indeed it be not ; why should such a person think it impossible to make men believe that to be received from Christ which he really thinks was received, and thinks he can makes it appear

appear that it was so? And if this be granted, then it is not impossible that *Man, though he be a rational Creature,* may attempt to innovate. And if so, then his *second Principle* is not proved. If Mr. S. had any regard to *the noble Science of Controversie* (whereof he pretends to be so great a Master) he would not bring such trifling Sophisms instead of demonstrative Proofs: And nothing less than a demonstrative Proof will serve to establish any Principle upon which a Demonstration is to be built.

SECT. IX.

§. I. **D**Octrines and Practises which must be acknowledged to have been innovated, have made the same pretence to uninterrupted Tradition. And of this I shall give several Instances; one among the *Jews*, the rest among *Christians*.

The third Answer to Mr. S's second Demonstration.

1. I shall instance among the *Traditionary Jews*, whose perswasion in our Saviours time was, and still is, that their *Oral Doctrine*, which they call their *Cabala*, hath descended to them from
R *Moses*

Moses uninterruptedly. Now here is the existence of such a persuasion, as Mr. S. affirms to be impossible without Traditions ever-indeficiency to beget it. And this persuasion of theirs is most exactly parallel with the pretensions of the *Romish* Church according to Mr. S. For here's a multitude of Traditionary *Jews*, manifoldly greater in proportion to the Dissenters in that Church, than the *Romish* Church is in comparison to those Christians that dissent from Her. *Josephus* tells us *, That the richer sort were of the persuasion of the *Sadduces*, but the multitude were on the *Pharisees* side. So that the *Pharisees* had this mark of the true Church (as *Bellarmino* calls it) common to them with the Church of *Rome*, that they were the greatest number, and so they continue to this very day; insomuch that although they do not call themselves the *Catholicks*, yet I am sure they call all *Jews* that do dissent from them *Schismatics*. Now that the *Sadduces* were for the written Law against Oral Tradition, is I confess no credit to us; but that our *Saviour* reprov'd the Traditionary Doctrines and Practises of the *Pharisees*,

* *Anriq.*
Jud. l. 13. c. 18.

Pharisees, because by them they made void the written Law, is much more to the discredit of the Assertors of Oral Tradition. Both *Romanists* and *Pharisees* they own alike a *written Doctrine*, but then they both pretend the true sense and explication thereof to have descended to them by *Oral Tradition*. For just as the *Traditionary Christians* do now, so *Josephus* tells * us * Ibid. l. 17. c. 3. & de Bell. Jud. l. 1. c. 4. & l. 2. c. 12. the *Traditionary Jews* of old, the *Pharisees*, did pretend by their Oral Tradition to interpret the Law more accurately and exactly than any other Sect. In like manner he * tells us, That * Antiq. l. 18. c. 2. all things, that belonged to Prayer and Divine Worship, were regulated and administered according to their interpretations of the Law. And they both agree in this, to make void the Word of God by their Tradition; which the *Pharisees* did no otherwise than Mr. S. does, by equalling *Oral Tradition to Scripture*; nay preferring it above *Scripture*, in making it the sole Rule of Faith, and interpreting the Scripture according to it. Hence are those common sayings in the *Talmud*, and other Jewish Books; Do not think that the written Law is

the foundation, but that the Law Orally delivered is the right foundation; which is to say with Mr. S. that not the Scripture, but Oral Tradition is the true Rule of Faith. Again, There is more in the words of the Scribes (viz. the Testifiers of Tradition) than in the words of the written Law. Again, The Oral Law excells the Written, as much as the Soul doth the Body; which accords very well with what Mr. S. frequently tells us, That the Scripture without Tradition is but a dead Letter, destitute of life and sense. Hence also it is that they required the People (as the Traditionary Church does now) to yield up themselves to the dictates of Tradition even in the most absurd things, as appears by that common saying among them, If the Scribes say that the right hand is the left, and the left the right (that Bread is, Flesh, and Wine is Blood) bearken to them, that is, make no scruple of whatsoever they deliver as Tradition, though never so contrary to Reason or Sense. And lastly, The Doctrines of the Pharisees were many of them practical; such were all those which concerned external

nal rites and observances, as *washing of hands and cups, &c.* So that these *Pharisaical* Traditions had also that *unspeakable* advantage which Mr. S. says renders their Traditions *unmistakeable*, That they were daily practised, and came down *clad in such plain matters of Fact*, that the most stupid man living could not possibly be ignorant of them. Therefore, according to Mr. S's Principles, it was impossible that any Age of the *Jews* should be persuaded that these things were commanded by *Moses* and ever since observed, if they had not been so: And yet our *Saviour* denies these Customs to have been of any such Authority as they pretended.

¶ 2. But I needed not to have taken all this pains to shew the agreement which is between the Traditionary *Jews* and *Papists*, their own Writers so liberally acknowledging it. Mr. *White* * indeed says, That *the Faith of the Jews was not delivered to them Orally, but by Writing*; than which nothing can be more inconsistent with his *Hypothesis*. For if the *Jewish Faith* was conveyed to them not *Orally*, but by *Writing*, then either the *Jewish Church* had no suffici-

* De Fid. &
Theol. Tract. 1.
Sect. 6.

* Rep. to K.
James, observ.
3. c. 4.

ent Rule of Faith, or else a Writing may be such a Rule. But other of their *Champions* make great use of the Parallel, between the Traditionary Jews and the *Romish* Church, to confirm from thence their own Traditionary Doctrines. Cardinal Perron hath a full passage to this purpose ; *As this* (says he *) *is to preserve a sound and entire respect to the Majesty of the ancient Mosaick Scripture, to believe and observe not only all the things which are therein actually contained, but also those things which are therein contained mediately and relatively, as the Doctrines of Paradise, &c. which were not contained therein but mediately, and by the authority which it gave to the deposition of the Patriarchal and Mosaick Tradition, preserved by heart, and in the Oral Doctrine of the Synagogue : So this is to preserve a sound and entire respect to the Majesty of the Apostolical Scripture, to believe and observe all the things which it contains, not only immediately and by it self, but mediately and by reference to the Apostolical Traditions, to which in gross and generally it gives the Authority of Apostolical Doctrines, and to the*

the Church the Authority of Guardian and Depositary to preserve and attest them. Voysin in his Observations upon Raymundus Martyn, tells us, That as in* * Pugio Fid. P. 145.
the Old Law the great Consistory at Jerusalem was the foundation of the true Tradition, so (says he) the See of Rome is the foundation of our Traditions. And as the continual succession of the High Priests and Fathers among the Jews was the great confirmation of the Truth of their Traditions, so (says he) with us the Truth of our Catholick Doctrine is confirmed by a continual succession of Popes.

§. 3. From all this it appears, that the Pharisees among the Jews made the same pretence to Oral Tradition which the Papists do at this day according to Mr. S. And if so, then Mr. S's Demonstration *a Posteriori* is every whit as strong for the Jews against our Saviour, as it is for the Papists against the Protestants. For we find that in our Saviour's time, it was then the present perswasion of the Traditionary Jews, that their Faith, and their Rites, and the true sense and interpretation of their written Law was descended from

Moses and the Prophets to them uninterruptedly; which we find was most firmly rooted in their hearts. But the Jews had a constant Tradition among them, that the Messiah was to be a great temporal Prince: And though the Letters of the Prophecies concerning him, might well enough have been accommodated to the low and suffering condition of our Saviour; yet they did infallibly know that their Messiah was to be another kind of person, from sense written in their hearts, from the interpretation of those Prophecies Orally brought down to them from the Patriarchal and Mosaick Tradition preserved by heart and in the Oral Doctrine of the Synagogue, and from the living voice of their Church essential, that is, the universal consent of the then Traditionary Jews. If it be said, That the Jewish Tradition did indeed bring down several Doctrines not contained in Scripture, of Paradise, of Hell, of the last Judgment, of the Resurrection, &c. (as Cardinal Perron affirms) but it did not bring down this Point of the Messiah's being a Temporal Prince: Then as Mr. s. * asks us, so the Jew does him;

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By what *virtue Tradition brought down those other Points ? and whether the same virtue were not powerful to bring down this as well as those ?* Then he will ask him farther, *Is there not a necessary connexion and relation between a constant Cause, and its formal Effect ? So that if its formal Effect be Points received as delivered ever, the proper Cause must be an ever-delivery ; whence he will argue from such an Effect to its Cause for any particular Point, and consequently for this Point that is in Controversie between Jews and Christians, concerning the Messiah's being a Temporal Prince, in case it be a Point held ever delivered ; but most certain it is, it was so held by the Jews in our Saviours time, and hath been held so ever since to this day.*

I shall not trouble the Reader with transcribing the rest of this Demonstration, only desire him as he reads it over, to imagine instead of Mr. S. a Pharisee, demonstrating against one of Christs Disciples the Infallibility of the Oral Tradition of the Jews : And I doubt not but he will find this Demonstration, and every part of it (changing only the Names) as forcibly concluding

ding *Christ* not to be the *Messiah*, as it doth infer any point of Popery against the *Protestants*.

* Apol.
123, &c.

§. 4. Before I leave this *Instance* of the *Jewish Tradition*, I shall briefly consider what Mr. *White* * hath offered by way of answer to it; as, *First*, That the *matter* of these Traditions is nothing else but *Explications of Scripture framed and invented by their own Rabbines*. So we say, that the Popish Traditions are Innovations. But then Mr. *White*, and Mr. *S.* tell us, That they can demonstrate them to be descended from *Christ* and his *Apostles*, because it is the present persuasion of a multitude of *Christians* that they are so descended. In like manner, if this Demonstration be good, the *Jews* can prove their Traditions to be descended from *Moses* and the *Prophets*. *Secondly*, He says, that the *form* of these Traditions is more ridiculous than the *Canting of Gypsies*, or the *jugling of Hocus-pocus*, because it consists in inventing the sense of *Scripture* from the *mysteries*, and *numbers*, and *changes of Letters*. This is a gross inexcusable mistake. For though the *Jews* have such a *Cabala* (called *Geometry*)

matry) as this which Mr. *White* describes ; yet that *Cabala* which is urged in this *Instance*, and which our Saviour reproves in the *Pharisees* by the name of Tradition, is quite another thing, and among the Jewish Writers known by the name of the *Unwritten or Oral Law* ; which they say was delivered to *Moses* on Mount *Sinai*, and by him conveyed to *Aaron* and *Joshua*, and the *Elders*, and successively delivered down from one Age to another ; and at last by *Rabbi Jehuda* compiled into one Volume, which they call *Mishna*, or *Συρίσμα*. And this does not consist in the Art of Numbring, Combining, or changing of Letters, as Mr. *White* imagines. But suppose it did so, and were more ridiculous than he conceits it to be ; the *Instance* would be so much the more conclusive against them, if what they affirm be true, That *Oral Tradition* is infallible, and that the perswasion of a Traditionary Church in any Age, that such a Doctrine descended to them from *Christ* or *Moses*, be a demonstration that it did so : For if this be sufficient evidence, 'tis nothing to the purpose what the Doctrine be

be either for *matter* or *form*: For if it be once demonstrated to have come from *Christ* or *Moses*, it is without any farther dispute to be received as of Divine authority. So that Mr. *White* quite alters the state of the question; which was not whether the Jewish *Cabala* be absurd and ridiculous, but whether the general perswasion of the Jews in any Age, that it descended to them by uninterrupted Tradition from *Adams*, be a demonstration that it did so. If it be, then the Jewish *Cabala* is as demonstratively of Divine Authority as the Oral Doctrine of the Papists. *Thirdly*, He says, *This Cabala was a Doctrine delivered to few, and that with strict charge to keep it from Publicity, and so communicate it again successively to a select Committee of a few; wherein* (says he) *you may see as fair an opportunity for juggling and couzenage, as in our case there is an impossibility.* This I think is true of the *Cabala* which it (seems) Mr. *White* had only in his view, but is a horrible mistake if he speak of the Oral Law which was contained in the *Mishnah*, and which this Instance only intends. For of this

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Maimonides * says exprelly, *That in every Age, from the time of Moses to Rabbi Jehudah, who compiled the Mishna, the Oral Law was publickly taught: And that after Rabbi Jehudah had compiled it into one Volume, the Israelites did generally write out Copies of it, and it was every where carefully taught, for fear lest the Oral Law should by forgetfulness be lost among the Jews. So that upon account of the publickness of the Doctrine, there is as great an impossibility of Juggling and Conzenage in the case of the Jewish as of the Romish Tradition. Besides, was washing of Hands and Cups, which they also pretended to have come down to them from Moses, and to have been constantly practised in every Age, a secret thing? Was it not a practical Tradition, and performed in a sensible matter? If therefore no Age can conspire to impose upon the next in a plain custom; and if an universal Tradition of such a thing cannot come in without such a conspiracy: How could this be the perswasion of any Age, that washing of Hands, &c. was prescribed by Moses and practised in all Ages, if it had not truly been so?*

* In Prafat. Sum. Talmud.

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 §. 5. Secondly, As for *Instances* among *Christians*, whereof many remain yet upon Record; as namely, the various and opposite Traditions about the *time of Easter*, and concerning the *Baptism of Hereticks*; and the Apostolical Tradition (as *St. Austin* calls it) concerning the *admission of Infants to the Communion*; all which have been frequently urged in this Controversie, and none of them yet sufficiently answered; I shall to avoid tediousness, passing by these, insist only upon that of the *Chiliasm*; which in *Justin Martyr's* time was the persuasion of all Orthodox Christians, that is (in Mr. S's Dialect) of all the *holders to Tradition*. For if notwithstanding the persuasion of that Age, that this Doctrine was descended to them from the Apostles, it was not really so descended; then the persuasion of Christians in any Age, that a Doctrine was brought down to them from the Apostles, is no Demonstration that it was so.

§. 6. To this *Instance* Mr. *White* answers* by telling us, that *Eusebius* says that this Tradition sprang from *Papias* (a good but a credulous and simple man) who

* Apol. p. 78.
 79, &c.

who it seems was mistaken in saying that it was the Apostles Doctrine. But for all this, *Justin Martyr* says it was received by all *Orthodox Christians* in his Time, as a Doctrine descended to them from the Apostles. And if *Justin* said true, nothing can make more against their Demonstration of the Infallibility of Tradition, than the natural consequence from these two sayings of *Ensebius* and *Justin*, which is this, That the mistake of one simple and credulous man may in an Age or two give occasion to the universal entertainment of a Doctrine, as descended down to them from Christ and his Apostles, when there was no such matter. Hath not Mr. *White* now done his *Rule of Faith* great service by this Answer? But it is according to his manner in all his Writings, to say any thing to remove a present Objection, though never so much to the prejudice of his main *Hypothesis*; then which I do not know any quality in a *Writer* which doth more certainly betray the want either of judgment, or of sincerity, or of a good Cause.

§. 7. And whereas he says *, *That* * Apol. p. 81.
Irenæus his testimony proves it to be

no Tradition; for he sets down the supposed words of our Saviour, which plainly shews it is a story, not a Tradition; a Tradition being a sense delivered not in set words, but settled in the Auditors hearts by hundreds of different expressions explicating the same meaning. When I consider this passage of Mr. White, I confess I cannot complement him, and say (as he makes his Nephew do in the Dialogue * between them) *I cannot but applaud your Discourse, it hath so pleasing and attractive a countenance. And again *, I am not able to oppose what you say by any weighty Objection, your Arguments being not only strong and nervous, but of so comely and winning a complexion, &c.* I cannot (I say) speak all this of his present Argument. But I may deservedly apply to it the last part of his Nephew's Complement, That it is an Argument so framed, as if without any evidence of its consequence it would persuade men to believe it. But to return an Answer to this passage: It seems (according to Mr. White) that Irenæus was mistaken in the very nature of Tradition: and if so learned a Father was ignorant in the

* Rushworth
Dial. 4. Sect. 4.

* Ibid. Sect. 5.

com^e

common Rule of Faith, what can we (to use Mr. S's words *) *undertakingly promise to weaker heads?* Mr. S. instanceth in the *Creed*, and *Ten Commandments*, as the principal Traditions which Parents teach their Children; but now Mr. *White* can shew plainly that these are no Traditions but *Stories*, because *Tradition is a sense delivered not in set words, &c.* As if Christ and his Apostles could deliver no Doctrine unless they expressed the same thing an hundred several ways. But suppose they did so (which no man hath any reason to imagine, because a thing may be expressed as plainly by one way as by an hundred) can no man deliver this Tradition who speaks it in any one of those expressions? If one should employ his Servant to carry a Message, and (because Mr. *White* thinks this necessary) should settle the meaning of it in his heart, by telling him the same thing in an hundred several expressions; and the Servant should go and deliver this Message in one of those very expressions that his Master used to him, and should say these were his Masters very words; would not this be well enough?

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No, if he had come to such a Philosopher as Mr. *White*, he would soon have given him to understand that he was not fit to bring a Message, or to be credited in it, who had so little wit as not to know that a Message is a thing not to be delivered *in set-words*. And now I would entreat Mr. *White* to reconcile himself in this matter to his Friends. Mr. *Rushworth* says *, 'Tis impossible to put fully and beyond all quarrel the same sense in divers words: Which if it be true, I would fain know what certain course Mr. *White* can prescribe to explicate the same meaning by hundreds of different expressions, and consequently how Tradition can be infallibly conveyed by settling the sense of it in the Auditors hearts by such variety of expressions. Mr. *Cressy* * likewise (a zealous Assertor of Tradition) does affirm, That the Primitive Churches were even to excess scrupulous in maintaining the very phrases of Traditionary Doctrines; which (according to Mr. *White*) plainly shews these Doctrines to be stories, not Traditions, because Tradition is a sense delivered not in set-words. The same Author complains, That

* Dialog.
2. Sect. 6.

* Exomolog.
C. 10.
Sect. 4.

* *That few among their learnedst Masters* * Ibid. c. 19.
of Controversie, propose the Points to be Sect. 2.
disputed between them and the Prote-
stants, in the Language of the Church.
 By which I suppose he does not mean,
 that these Controvertists were to blame
 in that they did not settle the sense of
 these Points by hundreds of different ex-
 pressions explicating the same meaning,
 but that they did not keep to the words
 wherein the Church had in Councils or
 otherwise (if there be any other way)
 declared her sense of those Points. A-
 gain * he says, That St. Paul, referring * Ibid. c. 27.
to the Doctrine settled by Oral Instruction, Sect. 2:
to shew the uniformity of it everywhere,
calls it a form of wholsom words. From
 whence we may conclude either that St.
 Paul did not well to call the Traditio-
 nary Doctrine (as Mr. Cressy says he
 does) a form of words, or else (which
 is more probable) that Mr. White is
 mistaken in saying, That a Tradition is
 a sense not delivered in set-words. Fur-
 thermore, the same Mr. Cressy * tells us, * Ibid. c. 28.
 That St. Augustine was careful not only Sect. 1.
to deliver Traditional Truths themselves,
but the terms also in which those Truths
were conveyed to his Times. But now

Mr. *White* could have informed St. *Augustin*, that this officious care of his was not only superfluous, but pernicious to Tradition.

§. 8. But to return to *Justin's* Testimony; to which the summe of Mr. *Whites* answer is, That *Justin* esteem'd it not as a point necessary to salvation; but rather a piece of Learning higher than the common: Since he both acknowledges other Catholics held the contrary, and entitles those of his persuasion κατὰ τὰ ἴδια ἐπιστολάμους right in all opinions, that is, wholly of his own mind. It is not material to my purpose, whether or no *Justin* look'd upon this as a point necessary to Salvation, so long as it is evident that he looked upon it as a Divine Revelation and part of the Christian Doctrine. And yet it seems he thought it a point of more than ordinary importance, because he joins it with the Doctrine of the Resurrection, and says that it was not disowned by any but those who also denied the Resurrection. But whereas Mr. *White* says that *Justin* acknowledges other Catholics to have held the contrary, I hope to make it evident from the scope and series of his Discourse;

course, that he acknowledges no such thing; but that the plain design of his Discourse, is to shew that this Doctrine was owned by all true Christians. For when Trypho asks him *, Whether the Christians did indeed believe that *Jerusalem should be re-built, &c.* He returns him this answer, *I am not such a Wretch as to speak otherwise than I think. I have told thee before that my self and many others (as ye all know) are of the mind that this will come to pass. But, that many indeed of those Christians who, are [not] of the pure and pious persuasion, do not own this, I have intimated to thee.* That the negative particle (though omitted in the Copy) ought to be thus inserted, will be clear to any one that considers what follows. For after he had spoken of those who disown this Doctrine, he immediately adds by way of further description of them, that though they are called Christians yet in Truth they are not Christians, in these words; *For of these (viz. the Dis-owners of this Doctrine) who are called indeed Christians, but are atheistical and impious Hereticks, I have shewed thee that they teach in all Points*

* Dial. cum
Tryph. p. 306.
Edit. Luter
1615.

blasphemous, atheistical and absurd things. But that ye may know that I do not say this for you only; I will, according to my ability, compile all these Discourses which have past between us into one piece; in which I will by Writing make Profession of this very thing which I now declare to you. For I do not choose to follow men or the Doctrines of men, but God and such Doctrines as are from him. And though ye may have conversed with some who are called Christians, and yet do not acknowledg this; but even dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who also say that there is no Resurrection of the dead, but that so soon as they dye their Souls are received into Heaven: Do not count these men Christians; no more than a man, that considers things rightly, would own the Sadduces and such like Sects to be Jews, &c. But I my self, and as many Christians as are thoroughly of the right perswasion, do both know that there shall be a Resurrection of the Flesh, and a thousand years in Jerusalem which shall be built, adorned and enlarged, &c. Can any thing be plainer than that Justin endeavours by this Discourse to
 satisfie

satisfie *Typpo*, that this *Point* they were
 speaking of was a *Divine Doctrine*, and
 owned to be so by all Christians; ex-
 cept such as did only bear the Name and
 Title of Christians, but were indeed
 blasphemous Hereticks and deniers of
 the Resurrection? By which Character
 that he intends to describe the impious
 Sects of the *Gnosticks*, will appear by and
 by. So that Mr. *White* must either allow
 the inserting of the *negative Particle*
 (which Mr. *Mede* * proves to have been
 omitted in the Copy) or else acknow- * Nov. Edit,
 ledg that those who are *Christians only* p. 664.
in Name, but in Truth are impious bla-
sphemous and absurd Hereticks, may pro-
 perly be said to be of the pure and pi-
 ous Opinion of the Christians. And if
 only these be the *other Catholicks*, whom
 Mr. *White* says *Justin* acknowledges to
 have held contrary to the *Millenaries*,
 I am contented he should make his best
 of them. If Mr. *White* should blame
 the inserting of the *negative particle*
 [not] into *Justin's* Text, as too great
 a boldness with the *Fathers*; it were
 easily answered, that the sense evident-
 ly requires it. And in such a case it is
 no boldness, but such a liberty as the

* p. 31.

most Learned of their own Interpreters and Commentators upon the Fathers do frequently take. And for Mr. S. if he takes offence at this, one may with reason (since the exigency of the sense plainly requires the inserting of it) demand of him (what he * unreasonably does of us in relation to all the *affirmative Propositions of Scripture*) to demonstrate that the particle [not] was not left out of this Clause of *Justin*, by those who Transcribed the Book, But besides the exigency of the sense in this place; that the *negative* ought to have been inserted, will appear by the reference which *Justin* makes in this passage to something foregoing in the same Dialogue. *I have (says he) declared to thee before that my self and many others are of the mind that this will come to pass. But, that many indeed of those Christians, who are [not] of the pure and pious persuasion, do not own this, I have intimated to thee. For of these, who are called indeed Christians but are Atheistical and Impious Hereticks, I have shewed thee that they teach in all Points blasphemous, atheistical, and absurd things.* In these words he plainly refers

to

to some precedent passage, which if it can be found will be a certain Key to open to us the sense of this place. I know that Mr. *Mede* * (perhaps not observing it) thought that passage to have been fraudulently expunged by the Enemies of the *Millenary Opinion*: But it seems to me to be still extant. For I find towards the beginning of this *Dialogue*, after that *Justin* had endeavoured to prove at large out of Scripture this glorious coming of Christ, and to refute those who applied the *Texts* produced by him to that purpose to *Hezekiah*, and to *Solomon* whose falling off to Idolatry he occasionally mentions; whereupon *Trypho* objects to him that many who were called *Christians*, did also communicate in the Idol-feasts: To this, *I say*, I find *Justin* returning this answer *: *First*, He denies not that * P. 253. there are such as these *who own themselves Christians, and confess the crucified Jesus to be both Lord and Christ, and yet teach not his Doctrines, but the Doctrines of seducing spirits*. But, says he, *We who are the Disciples of the true and pure Doctrine of Jesus Christ are from this very thing the more strengthened*

ned in our Faith, and become more confirmed in the Hope which by him hath been declared to us. For we now see those things visibly and effectually accomplish'd which he before-hand told us would be done in his Name. For he said, *Many shall come in my Name, &c.* By which Hope any one that reads the Antecedents and Consequents will plainly see that *Justin* means the Hope of the *Millennium* (which he had been speaking of before) and consequently of the *Resurrection*, which he looked upon as having a strict Connexion with the Doctrine of the *Millennium*; because (as he tells us afterwards) *this Doctrine* was denied by none but such as also denied the *Resurrection*. And of these men his description runs on in these words, *πολλοι, &c.* *Many* (saith he) *both are and have been, that have come in the Name of Jesus, and taught both to speak and do atheistical and blasphemous things; and are by us denominated from those men from whom each of their Doctrines and Opinions had its rise* (namely as it follows *Marcionites, Valentini-ans, &c.*) *and all these in their several ways teach men to blaspheme the Crea-*

tor

tor of the Universe, and the Christ whose coming was foretold by him, and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

But we have no communion with them, as knowing them to be atheistical and impious, &c. This passage in hand, when I compare it with the Text before quoted and consider the words and characters of them both, I cannot but believe it the very same that he refers to in those words, *I have declared to thee, I have intimated to thee, &c.* If so, the matter in Controversie is clear, that the Doctrine of the *Millennium* was universal. If it be not the same, I could wish to be shew'd some other place in this *Dialogue*, where *Justin* makes any such *Declaration* or *Intimation*. In the mean while by comparison of these places, it is evident there are but two sorts of men that *Justin* speaks of. *First*, Who believe the *Millennium*;

We the Disciples * of the true and pure *Doctrine*, &c. viz. *My self* and many others; again, *my self* and as many *Christians* as are thoroughly * of the right persuasion. Secondly, Who deny the *Millennium*; *Many Christians*, saith *Justin*; but what Christians? Of a right persuasion.

* ὁ ἀληθινὸς καὶ καθαρός διδασκαλίας.
* ὁρθογνώμονες.

perswasion? That, saith he, *I have signified before.* τὸ ἴδιον &c. For I have shew'd thee of them who are called Christians, but are indeed Atheists and impious Hereticks, that they teach blasphemous and atheistical and absurd things: And true it is, he did shew before that those who deny'd the Millennium were many in number, and were called Christians, &c. but were Teachers of blasphemous and atheistical things, &c. and known to be Atheists and Impious, &c. But he shew'd it of none other besides these. So that if this Doctrine were likewise denied by many Christians of the pure and pious perswasion, than Justin Martyr had fouldely forgot himself. But if not, then it is plain that the Transcribers have wronged Justin by leaving out a Negative which ought to have been inserted. It is worth observing by the way how Mr. White pleases himself with false and frivolous Criticisms upon the words, πολλοὶ & ὁρισμένοι. False they are, as Mr. White shall know if he desires to hear any more of them; and frivolous they are rendered by my preceding Discourse; for which reason I say no more of them. But I think

think he may do well hereafter (as Mr. S. * warily suggests) not to engage * P. 68. himself, nor be *hook'd* by others, out of his own *infallible way*, but leave it wholly to the * *Bird-witted* Hereticks * P. 69. (as Mr. S. calls them) to *perch upon the specifical natures* of Words, as he does of Things.

§. 9. Besides these *Instances* I have given of Doctrines and Practises which Mr. S. cannot deny to have been innovated, I might instance likewise in the chief *Points* of Popery, and shew that for all their pretence to *Tradition*, they are really *Innovations*. But because this would engage me in tedious Disputes about particular *Points*, I will only single out one of their most fundamental *Doctrines*, viz. that of *Transubstantiation*; concerning which I shall shew that, notwithstanding it is the universal perswasion of the present *Roman Church*, yet they have not, nor can have any assurance that it was the Doctrine of Christ, and that it is descended to them by an uninterrupted Tradition. I shall not at all contend against the word *Transubstantiation* (which is generally acknowledged to be new) but only

only the thing signified by it, a substantial change of the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. And this I might shew at large not to have been the Doctrine of the ancient *Fathers*. But because Mr. *White*, and Dr. *Holden*, and Mr. *Cressy* do so frequently and confidently tell us, that nothing is to be reputed a Traditionary Doctrine the contrary whereof hath been publickly held by any Catholick who continued afterwards uncensured, and in the Communion of the Church: Therefore I shall content my self at present with one clear *Testimony*, and that of a very eminent *Person* in the Church, St. *Theodore*, concerning whom Pope *Leo* (in an Epistle to him, at the end of *Theodore's Works*) gives this Testimony, That *in the judgment of the Apostolick See he was free from all stain of Heresie*. The passage I intend is in his *Dialogues*, between a *Catholick* under the name of *Orthodoxus*, and *Eranistes* who sustained the person of an *Heretick*. *Eranistes* * maintaining that the Body of Christ was changed into the substance of the Divinity, he illustrates it by this similitude. As (says
(he

* Dialog. 2.

he) the *Symbols of the Lords Body and Blood* are one thing before the invocation of the Priest; but after the invocation are changed and do become another thing: So the *Body of our Lord*, after his *Ascension*, is changed into the *Divine substance*. To which *Orthodoxus* returns this answer, *Thou art caught in thine own Net*. Because the *mystical Symbols* after *Consecration* do not pass out of *their own Nature*; for they remain in their former *substance, figure, and appearance*, and may be seen and handled even as before. He does not only in expresse words deny the substance of the Symbols to be changed, but the occasion upon which these words are brought in, and the scope of them (if they be of any force against the *Heretics* illustration) renders them incapable of any other sense. When *Mr. s.* hath answered this *Testimony*, I have more for him.

That which I mainly urge against this *Doctrine* is, the monstrous *Absurdities* and *Contradictions* contained in it, together with the necessary consequence of them. Several of the *Absurdities* of it are well brought together by *scotus*,

* Distinct. l. 4.
dist. 10. qu. 1.
n: 3.

tus *, who tells us, That to prove the possibility of Christs *Body* being contained under the *species* of *Bread* and *Wine* many things must be proved which seem to involve a Contradiction; as, 1. *That one quantum* (or extended Body) *may be together in the very same place with another.* 2. *That a less quantum may be together in the same place with a greater*; i. e. a Body of less extension may occupy not only the same, but as much room as a Body of greater extension does; which is to say no more but this, that a Body less than another may be as great as that other even whil'st it is less than it. 3. *That a greater quantum may be together with every part of a less quantum*, i. e. a Body that is greater than another, may be as little as the least part of that other Body which is less than it. 4. *That a subject may be without quantity*, i. e. there may be a Body which hath no kind of Magnitude. 5. *That a Body may be somewhere where it was not before, without changing its place*, i. e. a Body may be removed to another place, whil'st it remains still in the same place. 6. *That a quantum may be without any*
quan-

quantitative Mode, i.e. a Body may be extended without any manner of extension. *The possibility of all which*, he saith (and I am very much of his mind) *it would be too tedious a work to prove*; and therefore he only attempts to prove *the two last*, which (in all reason) is work enough for one man. All these *seeming* Contradictions (as he modestly calls them) are by his own acknowledgment involved in this Doctrine. To these I might add many more; as, How a thing can be said to be changed into another thing which did exist before? How a Body can be present in a place after the manner of a spirit? and yet this they affirm concerning the presence of Christs Body in the Sacrament; one might as well say that Snow is black, but not after the manner of blackness, but in the way of whiteness; which is to talk non-sense after the manner of sense: How the whole Body of Christ can be contained under the least sensible part of the species of Bread; as is generally affirmed: nay, and *Scotus* * adds, that the whole Body is under every little part in its full proportion; for he says expressly, That the

* Ibid. qu. 1.
n. 12.

T

Head

Head and Foot of the Body of Christ are as far distant from one another in the sacrament, as they are in Heaven; as if one should say that a Body, all whose parts lye within the compass of a small pins-head, may yet within that little compass have parts two yards distant from one another: And lastly, how the sensible species of Bread, e.g. quantity, whiteness, softness, &c. can exist without any subject? to affirm the possibility of which (as generally they do) is to say that there may be quantities of white and soft nothings; For this is the plain English of that assertion, that sensible species may exist without a subject; which being strip't of those terms of Art (species and subject) that do a little disguise it, it appears to be plain Non-sense.

Now the proper and necessary consequence of this Doctrine is to take away all certainty, and especially the certainty of sense. For if that which my sight and taste and touch do all assure me to be a little piece of Wafer, may notwithstanding this be Flesh and Blood, even the whole Body of a man; then notwithstanding the greatest assurance that Sense can give me, that any thing is this or that,

that, it may be quite another thing from what Sense reported it to be. If so, then farewell the *Infallibility* of Tradition, which depends upon the certainty of Sense : And which is a worse consequence, if this Doctrine be admitted we can have no sufficient assurance that the Christian Doctrine is a Divine Revelation. For the assurance of that depending upon the assurance we have of the Miracles said to be wrought for the confirmation of it, and all the assurance we can have of a Miracle depending upon the certainty of our senses, it is very plain that *that* Doctrine which takes away the certainty of Sense does in so doing overthrow the certainty of Christian Religion. And what can be more vain than to pretend, that a man may be assured that such a Doctrine is revealed by God, and consequently true, which if it be true, a man can have no assurance at all of any Divine Revelation? Surely nothing is to be admitted by us as certain, which being admitted we can be certain of nothing. It is a wonder that any man who considers the natural consequences of this *Doctrine* can be a Papist; unless he have attained to Mr. Cressy's pitch of

* Exomol.
c. 73. Sect. 7.

Learning, who speaking of the difficult Arguments wherewith this Doctrine was pressed, says * plainly, *I must answer freely and ingenuously, that I have not learned to answer such Arguments, but to despise them.* And if this be a good way, when ever we have a mind to believe any thing to scorn those Objections against it which we cannot solve; then Christian Religion hath no advantage above the vilest Enthusiasms; and a Turk may maintain *Mahomet* and his *Alcoran* (in opposition to *Christ* and his *Doctrine*) against all that *Grotius*, or any other hath said, if he can but keep his countenance, and gravely say, *I have not learned to answer such Arguments, but to despise them.*

§. 10. I will add one *Instance* more in another kind, to shew the uncertainty of *Oral* and *Practical* Traditions, and that shall be the Tradition concerning *Pope Jone*; than which scarce any was ever more generally received in the *Historical* kind. Many and great *Authors* affirm it, as *Testifiers* of the general Fame. None ever denied it till the *Reformers* had made use of it to the disadvantage of *Popery*. Since that time
not

not only Papists deny it, but several of our own Writers cease to believe it. *Phil. Bergomensis* tells the story thus: Anno 858. John the 7th, Pope, &c. The Tradition is that this person was a Woman, &c. Here's an Oral Tradition. He concludes thus; In detestation of whose filthiness, and to perpetuate the memory of her Name, the Popes even to this day going on Procession with the People and the Clergy, when they come to the place of her Travel, &c. in token of abomination they turn from it, and go a by-way; and being past that detestable place, they return into the way, and finish their Procession. Here is one Practical Tradition. And for avoiding of the like miscarriages, it was decreed that no one should thereafter be admitted into St. Peter's Chair priusquam per foratam sedem futuri Pontificis genitalia ab ultimo Dyacone Cardinale attractarentur: Here is another with a Witness. * *Sabellicus* * *Ennead. 9.* relates the same; and moreover says L. 1. that this *Porphyry Chair* was in his time to be seen in the Popes Palace. He adds indeed that *Platina* thinks that this Tradition of Pope Jone was not faithfully delivered to Posterity. But however (says he)

he) *such a Tradition there is.* Concerning the *first Practical Tradition*, *Platina* says that he *may not deny it.* For the *second*, he thinks the *Chair* rather design'd for a *Stool* for another use, &c. He concludes, *These things which I have related are commonly reported, yet from uncertain and obscure Authors: Therefore I resolved (says he) briefly and nakedly to set them down, lest I should seem too obstinately and pertinaciously to have omitted that which almost all affirm.* It is no wonder that he says the *Authors* of this Report were *uncertain and obscure*, since so very few writ any thing in that Age. But suppose none had writ of it, so long as he acknowledges it to have been a *general Oral Tradition* attested by a solemn and constant *Practice*, it has (according to Mr. S's Principles) greater certainty than if it had been brought down to us by a hundred Books written in that very Age. So that here's an *Oral and Practical Tradition*, continued we are sure for some hundreds of years, preserved and propagated by a solemn *practice* of the *Popes, Clergy and People of Rome* in their *Processions*, and by a *notorious Custom* at the *Election* of every *Pope*; and in a matter

matter of so great importance to their Religion (the honour of the See of *Rome*, and the uninterrupted Succession from *St. Peter* being so nearly concerned in it) that, had it been false, they had been obliged under pain of Damnation, not only not to have promoted it, but to have used all means to have discovered the falsity of it. Therefore Mr. S. is bound by his own Principles either to allow it for a Truth, or else to give an account when and how it begun; which may possibly be made out by *We Metaphysicians* (as he * styles himself, and his *Scientifical Brethren*) but I assure him it is past the skill of * *Note-book Learning*.

* P. 340.

* P. 337.

SECT. X.

§. 1. IT is not the present perswasion of the *Church of Rome*, nor ever was, that their Faith hath descended to them by *Oral Tradition* as the sole Rule of it. And this being proved, the *Supposition* upon which his *Demonstration* is built falls to the ground.

The fourth Answer to his second Demonstration:

And for the proof of this, I appeal to that * *Decree* of the *Council of Trent*, in which they declare, That because the

* Decret. primum quartæ Sess.

*Christian Faith and Discipline are contained in written Books and unwritten Traditions, &c. therefore they do receive and honour the Books of Scripture and also Traditions [pari pietatis affectu ac reverentiâ] with equal pious affection and reverence ; which I understand not how those do, who set aside the Scripture, and make Tradition the sole Rule of their Faith. And consonantly to this Decree, the general Doctrine of the Romish Church is, that Scripture and Tradition make up the Rule of Faith. So the Roman Catechism (set forth by order of the Council of Trent) says * that the sum of the Doctrine delivered to the Faithful is contained in the Word of God, which is distributed into Scripture and Tradition. Bellarmine * speaks to the same purpose, That the Scripture is a Rule of Faith, not an entire but partial one. The entire Rule is the Word of God, which is divided into two partial Rules, Scripture, and Tradition. According to this, the adequate Rule of Faith is the Word of God ; which is contained partly in Scripture. and partly in the Tradition of the Church. And that Scripture is look't upon by them as the principal*

* In Praefat.

* De Verbo Dei, &c. L. 4. 12.

principal Rule and primary foundation of their Faith, and Tradition as only supplying the defects of Scripture, as to some Doctrines and Rites not contained in Scripture, must be evident to any one that hath been conversant in the chief of their controversial Divines.

Bellarmino * where he gives the marks of a *Divine Tradition* speaks to this purpose, That that which they call a

* De Verbo Dei non scripto. L. 4. c. 9.

Divine Tradition is such a *Doctrine* or *Rite* as is not found in *Scripture*, but embraced by the whole Church; and for that reason believed to have descended from the Apostles. And he tells us further *, That the Apostles committed all

* Ibid. c. 11.

to *Writing*, which was commonly and publicly Preached; and that all things are in *Scripture*, which men are bound to know and believe explicitly: But then he says, that there were other things which the Apostles did not commonly and publicly teach; and these they did not commit to *Writing*, but delivered them only by *word of mouth* to the *Prelates and Priests and perfect men of the Church*. And these are the *Apostolical Traditions* he speaks of. *Cardinal Perron* * says, That the *Scripture*

* Reply. Ob-
servat. 3. c. 4.

is the foundation of the Christian Doctrine, either mediately or immediately. And that the Authority of unwritten Tradition is founded in general on these sentences of the Apostle, * Hold the Traditions, &c. Again, * The things which

* 2 Thess. 2. 15.

* 2 Tim. 2. 2.

thou hast heard of me among many Witnesses commit to faithful men, &c. And that the Authority of the Church to preserve, and especially to declare these, is

* 1 Tim. 3. 15.

founded in this Proposition, viz. * That the Church is the pillar and ground of Truth. So that according to him, the primary Rule of Faith is the Scripture, in which the Authority of Tradition is founded.

* Charity
maintained.
c. 2. Sect. 1.

Mr. Knott * says expressly, We acknowledge the H. Scripture to be a most perfect Rule, for as much as a Writing can be a Rule; we only deny that it excludes, either Divine Tradition, though it be unwritten, or an external Judg to keep, to propose, to interpret it, &c. So that (according to him) Scripture is a perfect Rule, only it does not exclude unwritten Tradition, &c. By which that he does not understand (as Mr. S. does) a concurrent Oral Tradition of all the same Doctrines which are contained in Scripture, but other Doctrines

not

not therein contained; is plain from what he says elsewhere*, *We do not distinguish Tradition from the written Word, because Tradition is not written by any, or in any Book or Writing; but because it is not written in the Scripture or Bible; Bellarmine** also says the same. And as for the interpreting of Scripture, he tells us that this is not the office of a Rule, but of a Judg. * *There is (says he) a great and plain distinction between a Judg and a Rule. For as in a Kingdom the Judg hath his Rule to follow, which are the received Laws and Customs; which are not fit or able to declare, and be Judges to themselves, but that Office must belong to a living Judg: So the Holy Scripture is and may be a Rule, but cannot be a Judg.* Here he makes the Scripture as much a Rule for matters of Faith, as the Laws of the Land are for Civil matters. And in his Reply to Mr. Chillingworth, he hath a Chapter of above 150 Pages, the Title whereof is, *Scripture is not the only Rule of Faith;* which (had he with Mr. S. believed Oral Tradition to be the sole Rule of Faith) had been as absurd as it would be to write a Book to prove

* Reply to Mr. Chill. c. 2. Sect. 179.

* De Verbo Dei, &c. L. 4. c. 2.

* Charity maintained. c. 2. Sect. 3.

* Exomol.
c. 20.

prove that *Turks* are not the *only Christians* in the World. Mr. *Cressy* likewise (not very consistently to himself) lays down this *Conclusion*; * *The entire Rule of faith is contained not only in Scripture, but likewise in unwritten Tradition.*

* Tabul. Suf-
frag. p. 96.

§. 2. Now all this is as contrary as can be to Mr. *Rushworth's* new Rule of Faith. Therefore Mr. *White* says *, *They speak ill who teach that some things are known in the Church from Scripture, some by Tradition.* And Dr. *Holden* (in opposition to those who make Scripture any part of the Rule of Faith) advances one of the most wild and uncharitable Positions that ever I yet met

* Analyf. Fid.
L. 1. c. 6.

withall, viz. * *That if one should believe all the Articles of the Catholick Faith, &c. for this reason because he thought they were all expressly revealed in Scripture, or implicitly contained so as they might be deduced from thence, and would not have believed them had he not judged that they might be evinced from Scripture; yet this man could be no true Catholick: Because (as he tells us afterwards *) we must receive the Christian Doctrine as coming to us by Tradition; for only by this*

* C. 8.

this means (excluding the Scriptures) Christ hath appointed revealed Truths to be received and communicated. In the mean time Cardinal Perron (unless he altered his mind) is in a sad case, who believed the Authority of Tradition itself for this reason, because it was founded in Scripture.

§. 3. And this fundamental difference about the Rule of Faith, between the generality of their Divines and Mr. S's small party, is fully acknowledged by the Traditionists themselves. Dr. Holden says*, That their Divines who * L. 1. c. 9. resolve Faith according to the common Opinion, do inevitably fall into that shameful Circle (of proving the Divine Authority of the Scripture by the Church, and the Infallibility of the Church back again by the Scripture) because they dare not build their Faith upon the natural evidence and certainty of Tradition. So that Dr. Holden's way of resolving Faith, is different from the common Opinion of their Divines, which he says * does not differ from the Opi- * L. 1. c. 3. nion of those who resolve their Faith into the private Spirit; and this (according to Mr. White *) is the very way of the * Exet. p. 70. the

* Ibid.

the Calvinists, and of the absurdest Sects. Nay, Mr. White says farther *, That he will be content to suffer all the punishment that is due to Calumniators, if the Roman Divines (he there speaks of) do not hold the same Rule of Faith with the Calvinists, and all the absurdest Sects. So that it seems that the Calvinists, &c. do not in their Rule of Faith differ from the Papists, but only from Mr. White, Mr. S. &c. Now the Divines he there speaks of, are the Censors of Doctrines at Rome, according to whose advice his infallible Holiness and the Cardinals of the Inquisition do usuall proceed in censuring of Doctrines. Concerning these Divines he goes on to expostulate in this manner; * Shall we endure these men to sit as Censors and Judges of Faith, who agree with Hereticks in the very first Principle which distinguishes Catholicks from Hereticks? Again *, These are thy gods O Rome! upon these thou dependest, whilst prating Ignorance triumphs in the Roman Colledg. And he says the same likewise of the generality of their School-Divines, whom he calls Scepticks, because they do not own his Demonstrative way. Insomuch that he

* Ib. P. 73:

* P. 144.

he tells us *, *That few sound parts are* * P. 64.
left uninfected with this Plague of Scep-
ticism *; *that this is an universal Gau-* * P. 149.
grene *; *that there are but few that go* * P. 67, 68.
the way of Demonstration, and these are
either wearied out, or else live retired-
ly, or despair of any remedy of these
things. And indeed all along that Book
 he bemoans himself and his Tradition-
 ary Brethren as a desolate and forlorn
 Party, who have Truth on their side, but
 want company and encouragement. So
 he tells us *, *That the true scientific* * P. 101.
Divines dare not profess their knowledg,
lest they should be exposed by the Sophi-
sters of their Church to the derision
and scorn either of their Judges or of
the People.

§. 4. So that upon examination of
 the whole matter, it appears that Mr. S's
Demonstration proceeds upon a false
supposition, That it is the persuasion
 of their present Church, that Tradition
 is the sole Rule of Faith. For there is
 no such matter; unless Mr. S. mean by
 their Church a few private persons, who
 are look'd upon by those who have the
 chief power in their Church as Hereti-
 cal: as we may reasonably conjecture
 by

by the proceedings at *Rome* against Mr. *White*; many of whose Books are there
 * *Exetaf. p. 9.* condemned *, as *containing things manifestly Heretical, erroneous in the Faith, rash, scandalous, seditious, and false respectively, &c.* And all this done, notwithstanding that the chief subject of those Books is the explication and defence of this most *Catholick* Principle, *That Oral Tradition is the only Rule of Faith.* To sum up then the whole business: If nothing be to be owned for Christian Doctrine (as the *Traditionists* say) but what is the general perswasion of those who are acknowledged to be in the communion of the *Roman Catholick* Church; then much less can this Principle (*That Oral Tradition is the sole Rule of Faith*) which is pretended to be the foundation of the whole Christian Doctrine, be received as descended from *Christ* and his *Apostles*; since it is so far from being the general perswasion of *that Church at the present*, that it has been, and still is generally disowned. But Mr. *White* has
 * *Apol. p. 38.* a *salvo* for this. For although he grant *, *That very many of their School-men maintain that Tradition is necessary only for*

for some Points, not clearly expressed in Scripture, whence (he says) it seems to follow that they build not the whole Body of their Faith upon Tradition: yet he tells us there is a vast difference betwixt relying on Tradition, and saying or thinking we do so. Suppose there be; yet I hope that mens saying that they do not rely on Tradition as their only Rule, is a better evidence that they do not, than any mans surmise to the contrary is that they do, though they think and say they do not; which is in effect to say that they do, though we have as much assurance as we can have that they do not. Besides, how is this Rule *self-evident to all*, even to the rude *Vulgar* as to its ruling power (as Mr. S. affirms it is) when the greatest part even of the *Learned* among them *think* and *say* that it is not the *only Rule*? But Mr. White endeavours to illustrate this dark point by a

* *similitude*, which is to this sense; As the *Scepticks* who deny this Principle, That *Contradictions* cannot be true at once, yet in their lives and civil actions proceed as if they owned it: So the *Schoolmen*, though they deny Tradition

* Ibid. P. 39.

to be the only Rule of their Faith, yet by resolving their Faith into the Church which owns this *Principle*, they do also in practice own it, though they say they do not. So that the generality of learned *Papists* are just such *Catholicks* as the *Scepticks* are *Dogmatists*, that is a company of absurd people that confute their *Principles* by their *practice*. According to this reasoning, I perceive the *Protestants* will prove as good *Catholicks* as any, for they do only *think* and *say* that *Tradition* is not the *Rule* of Faith; but that they practically rely upon it, Mr. S. hath past his word for them: For he assures us * (and we may rely upon a man that writes nothing but *Demonstration*) that *if we look narrowly into the bottom of our hearts, we shall discover the natural method of Tradition to have unawares settled our Judgments concerning Faith; however when our other Concerns awake design in us, we protest against it, and seem perhaps to our unreflecting selves to embrace and hold to the meer guidance of the Letter of Scripture.* So that in reality we are as good *Catholicks*, and as true *holders to Tradition* as any *Papist*

* P. 30. & 31.

pist of them all, at the bottom of our thoughts and in our settled judgments; however we have taken up an humour to *protest* against it, and *may seem* perhaps to our *unreflecting* selves to be Protestants.

§. 5. Thus much may suffice to have spoken to his *two* great Arguments; or * as he (good man) unfortunately calls * P. 173. them *Demonstrations*; which yet to say truth are not properly *his*, but the *Authors* of *Rushworth's* Dialogues, the main foundation of which *Book* is the substance of these *Demonstrations*. Only before I take leave of them, I cannot but reflect upon a passage of Mr. S's * * P. 163. wherein he tells his Readers that they are not *obliged to bend their brains to study his Book with that severity as they would do an Euclid*; meaning perhaps one of Mr. *White's* *Euclids*; for it does not appear by his way of Demonstration that ever he dealt with any other. As for the true *Euclid*, I suppose any one that hath tasted his Writings, will at the reading of Mr. S's unbend his *brains* without bidding, and smile to see himself so demurely discharged from a *study* so absurd and ridiculous.

SECT. XI.

Concerning
some other
advantages of
Tradition, &c.

§. I. I Should now take into consideration his Ninth *Discourse*, in which he pretends to *open the incomparable strength of the Churches humane Authority, and the Advantages which accrue to it by the supernatural assistances of the Holy Ghost*: But that there is nothing material in it, which hath not been answered already. Only I desire him to explain, how the supernatural Assistances of the Holy Ghost can (according to his Principles) add to our assurance of the certainty of Tradition. Because we can have no greater certainty of the supernatural Assistance of the Holy Ghost, than we have that there is an Holy Ghost, and of this we can have no certainty (according to Mr. s.) but by Tradition, which conveys this Doctrine to us. And if Tradition of it self can infallibly assure us that there are supernatural Assistances of the Holy Ghost, then a man must know that Tradition is infallible antecedently to his knowledg of any supernatural Assistance. And if so, what can any supernatural

pernatural Assistance add to my assurance of the certainty of Tradition, which I do suppose to be infallible before I can know of any supernatural Assistance? Can any thing be more ludicrous, than to build first all our certainty of the Assistance of the Holy Ghost upon the certainty of Tradition, and then afterwards to make the certainty of Tradition to rely upon the Assistance of the Holy Ghost? As if that could contribute to our assurance of the certainty of Tradition, which unless Tradition be first supposed certain, is it self wholly uncertain.

§. 2. The Conclusion of this Ninth *Discourse* is somewhat Extatical; possibly from a sudden disorder of his fancy upon the contemplation of his own performances, to see what a *Man* he has made himself (with the help of *Rusworth's Dialogues*) or rather what his *Party* has made him by the *Office* they put upon him: For it seems (by his telling) * Mr. *Cressy* and the rest are *P. 165. & 166. ordained to cajoll the *Fools*, leaving him the way of *Reason and Principles*; and that himself is chosen out to Demonstrate to the *Wise*, or those who judge of things

* P. 159.

things per altissimas causas In the discharge of which glorious Office he declares that he *intends no Confutation of those Authors* which Mr. Cressy and others have medled with : Yet if any will be so charitable as to judg he hath solidly confuted them, because he hath radically and fundamentally overthrown all their Arguments, &c. he shall rejoyce and be thankful. That the * intelligent Reader (for he writes to none but such) may also rejoyce with him, I shall recite the whole passage, for it is thick of Demostration, and as likely as any in his Book to have the *altissimas causas* contained in it.

* P. 93.

§. 3. * It would require a large Volume to unfold particularly how each virtne contributes to shew the inerrable inefficiency of Tradition, and how the Principles of almost each Science are concerned in demonstrating its Certainty ; Arithmetick lends her Numbring and Multiplying Faculty, to scan the vast Number of Testifiers ; Geometry her Proportions to shew a kind of infinite strength of Certitude in Christian Tradition, above those Attestations which breed Certainty in humane Affairs ; Logic

gick her skill to frame and make us see the connexions it has with the Principles of our Understanding; Nature her Laws of Motion and Action; Morality her first Principle that nothing is done gratis by a cognoscitive Nature, and that the Body of Traditionary Doctrine is most conformable to Practical Reason: Historical Prudence clears the Impossibility of an undiscernable revolt from Points so descended and held so Sacred; Politicks shew this to be the best way imaginable to convey down such a Law as it concerns every man to be skilful in; Metaphysicks engages the Essences of Things, and the very notion of Being which fixes every Truth, so establishing the scientificall Knowledges which spring from each particular Nature by their first Causes or Reasons exempt from change or motion. Divinity demonstrates it most worthy God and most conducive to bring Mankind to Bliss. Lastly, Controversie evidences the total uncertainty of any thing concerning Faith if this can be uncertain, and makes use of all the rest to establish the Certainty of this First Principle. A very fit conclusion for such Demonstrations as went before. It is well Mr. S. writes to none but in-

Intelligent Readers; for were it not a thousand pities, that so manly, and solid, and convincing a discourse as this should be cast away upon fools?

S E C T. XII.

Mr. S's Corollaries considered.

§. I. **A**S for his *Corollaries*, supposing them to be rightly deduced from his former Discourses, they must of necessity fall with them. For they signifie nothing but upon this supposition that his fore-going Discourses are true. And yet this being granted, it were easie to shew that most of them are grossly faulty. For, *First*. Several of them are plainly coincident. The *second*, viz. *None can with right pretend to be a Church but the followers of Tradition.* is the very same in sense with the 11th viz. *No company of men hang together like a Body of a Christian Commonwealth or Church, but that which adheres to Tradition.* So likewise the 12th and 14th are contained in the 15th: The 16th, and 17th, in the 19th: The 16th 17, 18th, and 19th in the 21st. And the 32d and 34th in the 31st. *Secondly*, Divers of them are manifestly absurd, as the 12th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, the sum of which is,
That

That there is *no arguing against Tradition from Scripture, or the Authority of the Church, or Fathers and Councils, or from History and Testimonial Writings, or from contrary Tradition, or Reason, or any Instances whatsoever*; which is as much as to say, If this *Proposition* be true, That *Tradition is certain*, then it cannot by any kind of Argument be proved to be false. But is this any peculiar Consecratory from the truth of this *Proposition*? Doth not the same follow from every Proposition? That if it be true, it cannot be proved to be false; yet no man was ever yet so frivolous, as to draw such a consequence from the supposed truth of any Proposition. His 23^d also is singularly absurd, That *there is no possibility of arguing at all against Tradition rightly understood, or the living voyce of the Catholick Church, with any shew of Reason*. These are large words. It might have contented a reasonable man to have said, that no good Argument could be brought against it: But he is jealous of his *Hypothesis*, and can never think it safe till it be shot-free; nor will that content him, but it must be also impossible for any one to make a *shew* of shooting at it. This were,

were, I confess, a peculiar priviledg of Mr. S's *Discourses* above other mens; if they were (as he says) by evidence of Demonstration so secured, that not only no substantial Argument could be brought against them, but that even the most subtile *Schoolman* of them all should not be able to come near them with so much as a *videtur quod non*. But it may be he means no more by this *Corollary*, than what he said in the 18th, viz. *That no solid Argument from Reason can be brought against Tradition*: If so, then the sense of his 23d *Corollary* must be this, That there is no possibility of arguing at all against Tradition with any *solid shew*, or *substantial shadow* of Reason; which would be a little inconvenient. I will instance but in one more, his 40th, which is this, *The knowledge of Traditions Certainty is the first knowledg or Principle in Controversial Divinity; i. e. without which nothing is known or knowable in that Science*. Which is to infer, that because he hath with much pains proved the certainty of Tradition, therefore it is *self evident*, i. e. needed no proof. Nay, it is to conclude the present matter in Controversie and that which is the main debate of his *Book*
to

to be the *first Principle* in Controversial Divinity, i.e. such a Proposition as every one ought to grant before he can have any right to dispute about it. This is a very prudent course, to make *begging the question* the *first Principle in Controversie*; which would it but be granted, I am very much of his mind that the *method* he takes would be the best way to make *Controversie* a *Science*; because he that should have the luck or boldness to beg first, would have it in his power to make what he pleased certain.

§.2. Were it worth while, I might further pursue the Absurdities of his *Corollaries*. For they are not so terrible as he makes shew of, by his telling Dr. Casaubon*, That *Sure-footing and its Corollaries may put him out of his Wits*: Which though intended for an Affront to the Doctor, yet it may be mollified with a good interpretation; for if the reading of wild and phantastical stuff be apt to disorder a very learned head, then so far Mr. S's saying may have truth in it.

It remains only that I requite his 41 *Corol.* not with an equal number, but with two or three natural *Consequentials* from the Doctrine of his Book.

First,

First, No man can certainly understand the meaning of any Book whatsoever, any farther than the Contents of it are made known to us by a concurrent *Oral Tradition*. For the Arguments whereby he and Mr. *Rushworth* endeavour to prove it impossible without *Tradition* to attain to the certain sense of Scripture, do equally extend to all other Books.

Secondly, The memory of matters of Fact done long ago may be better preserved by *general Rumor* than by publick *Records*. For this is the plain English of that Assertion, That *Oral Tradition* is a better and more secure way of Conveyance than Writing.

Thirdly, That the Generality of Papists are no Christians. For if (as he affirms) Tradition be the sole Rule of Faith, and those who disown this Rule be * *ipso facto cut off from the Root of Faith*, i. e. unchristian'd ; And if (as I have shewn) the Generality of Papists do disown this Rule : Then it is plain that they are no Christians.



THE
RULE of FAITH.

PART IV.

Testimonies concerning the Rule
of Faith.

SECT. I.

§. 1. **T**HUS far in the way of Reason and Principles. The rest is Note-book Learning, which he tells us * he is not much a Friend to; and there is no kindness lost, for it is as little a Friend to him and his Cause as he can be to it. I shall first examine the Authorities he brings for Tradition; and then produce express Testimonies in behalf of Scripture. In both which I shall be very brief; in the one, because his Testimonies require no long Answer; in the other, because it would

Mr. S's Testimonies examined.

would be to little purpose to trouble Mr. S. with many *Fathers*, who for ought appears by his *Book* is acquainted with none but *Father White*, as I shall shew hereafter. By the way, I cannot much blame him for the course he uses to take with other mens Testimonies, because it is the only way that a man in his circumstances can take; otherwise, nothing can be in it self more unreasonable, than to pretend to answer Testimonies by ranking them under so many *faulty Heads*; and having so done, magisterially to require his *Adversary* to vindicate them, by shewing that they do not fall under some of those *Heads*, though he have not said one word against any of them particularly; nay, though he have not so much as recited any one of them; for then the Trick would be spoiled, and his Catholick Reader who perhaps may believe him in the *general*, might see Reason not to do so if he should descend to *particulars*, which (as he well observes) would make his
 * *Discourse to look with a contingent Face.*

* P. 161.

§. 2. I begin with his three *Authorities* from Scripture; which when I
 con-

consider, I see no reason why he (of all men) should find fault with my Lord Bishop of Down's *Dissuasive* for being so
** thin and sleight in Scripture-Citations.* * P. 320.
 Nor do I see how he will answer it to Mr. *Rushworth*, for transgressing that prudent Rule of his, viz. ** That the Catho- * Dial. 2. Sect. 14.*
lick should never undertake to convince his Adversary out of Scripture, &c. For which he gives this substantial Reason,
** because this were to strengthen his Op. * Ibid.*
*ponent in his own Ground and Principle, viz. That all is to be proved out of Scrip- ture; which he tells us presently after is no more fit to convince, than a Beetle is to cut withall; meaning it perhaps of Texts so applied as these are which follow. * This shall be to you a direct * Isa. 35. 8. * Isa. 59. 21.*
*way, so that Fools cannot err in it. * This is my Covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit which is in thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart from thy mouth, and from the mouth of thy Seed, and from the mouth of thy Seeds seed from henceforth for ever. * I will give my Law in their bowels, and in their hearts will I write it: From which Texts if Mr. S. can prove Tradition to be the only Rule of Faith*

Faith, any better than the *Philosophers Stone* or the *Longitude* may be proved from the 1 *Cap. of Genesis*, I am content they should pass for valid Testimonies: Though I might require of him (by his own Law) before these *Texts* can signify any thing to his purpose, to demonstrate that this is the Traditionary sense of these *Texts*, and that it hath been universally in all Ages received by the Church under that Notion; and then to shew how it comes to pass that so many of the *Fathers*, and of their own *Commentators* have interpreted them to another sense: And *lastly*, to shew how Scripture which has no certain sense but from Tradition, and of the sense whereof Tradition cannot assure us, unless it be the *Rule of Faith*; I say, how *Scripture* can prove Tradition to be the *Rule of Faith*, which can prove nothing at all unless Tradition be first proved to be the *Rule of Faith*. This I take to be as *shameful a Circle* as that wherewith Dr. *Holden* upbraids the generality of his *Brethren*.

§. 3. I proceed to his *Authorities* from *Fathers* and *Councils*; all which (not one of them excepted) he hath taken out

out of Mr. *White's Tabula Suffragiales*, without the least acknowledgment from whom he had them. And that it might be evident that he had not consulted the Books themselves for them, he hath taken them with all their faults, and with the very same errors of Citation which Mr. *White* had been guilty of before him. So that though he is pleas'd to say of himself that * *he is a bad* * P. 239. *Transcriber*, yet I must do him that right, to assure the Reader that he does it very punctually and exactly.

§ 4. He begins with *Councils*, of which he tells us *he will only mention three in several Ages*.

The first is the *First Synod of Lateran*. One might have expected, after he had told us he would mention three in several Ages, he should have produced them according to the order of Time, and have begun with the Council of *Sardica*, which was near 300 years before the *Lateran*. But there was a good reason why the *Lateran* should be first produced, *viz.* because it is mentioned before the other in Mr. *White's Book*. Well, but what says this Synod? *We all confess unanimously and consequently, with one*

heart and mouth, the Tenets and Sayings of the Holy Fathers; adding nothing, subtracting nothing of those things which are delivered us by them; and we believe as the Fathers have believed, we Preach so as they have taught. The force of which Testimony Mr. S. lays upon the Word *delivered*, as if that Word where-ever it is met with in *Councils* or *Fathers*, must needs be understood of *oral delivery*; whereas it is a general Word indifferently used for conveyance either by *writing*, or *word of mouth*. In this place it plainly refers to the *writings* of particular *Fathers*, out of whom a long catalogue of Testimonies against the Heresie of the *Monothelites* had been read just before this Declaration of the Synod. Now what signifies this to *oral Tradition's* being the *Rule of Faith*, that this Synod declares her Faith, in opposition to the Heresie of the *Monothelites*, to be consonant in all things to those Testimonies which had been produced out of the Fathers?

The next is the *Council of Sardica*; out of an *Epistle* of which *Council* he cites these words, *We have received this Doctrine, we have been taught so, we hold this*

this Catholick Tradition, Faith and Confession. Which are general words, and indifferently applicable to *Oral Tradition*, or *Writing*, or both. But be they what they will, Mr. S. ought not to have been ignorant, that this Council was rejected by St. *Austin* and other Orthodox Fathers, as * *Binnius* acknowledges; and which is more, that the latter part of this *Epistle* (out of which part Mr. S. cites these words) which contains a *Confession of Faith*, is by * *Baronius* (and after him by *Binnius*) proved to have been surreptitiously added. For though it be found in *Theodoret*, and mentioned by *Sozomen*; yet *Baronius* thinks that it was the *Arian Confession* composed by the *false-Synod* of *Sardica* which sate at the same time; and that *Sozomen* lighting upon it, perhaps mistook it for the *Confession* of the Orthodox Synod of the same name. However that be, he proves out of *Athanasius*, and from the Testimony both of the Eastern and Western Bishops, that the Council of *Sardica* did not so much as add one word or tittle, no nor so much as explain any thing in the *Nicene Faith*. But Mr. *White* says nothing

thing of this, and therefore Mr. S. could not, who is no *Speculator* in these matters; but only as a *Testifier* delivers down these authorities to us as he received them by hand from Mr. White; and if the word *Tradition* be but in them, they are *Demonstrative*.

As for his *Testimonies* from the 2^d Council of Nice (which he calls the 7th General Council) who pretended their Doctrine of *Image-worship* to have descended to them by an *uninterrupted Tradition*, and proved it most doughtily by Texts of Scripture ridiculously wrested, by impertinent sayings out of obscure and counterfeit Authors, and by *scandalous* and *immodest Stories* (as is acknowledged by Pope * *Adrian* the 6th) of *Apparitions* and *Womens Dreams*, &c. for which I refer the Reader to the Council it self; which is such a mess of Popperies, that if a general Council of Atheists had met together with a design to abuse Religion by talking ridiculously concerning it, they could not have done it more effectually: I say, as for his Testimonies from this Council, I shall refer Mr. S. to that *Western Council* under *Charles the Great*, which a little

* Quodlibet 6. cited by Espen-cens in 2^d Epist. ad Tim. c. 4.

little after at *Francford* condemned, and also fully confuted the Decisions of this Council, calling their pretended *Tradition of Image-worship* [puridissimam Traditionem] a most stinking Tradition.

These are his authorities from Councils; *Where* (says he) we see *General Councils* relying on the Teaching of the Fathers or fore-going Church, and on the Churches Tradition as their Rule, &c. Where does he see any such matter? Or where does he see *General Councils*? Was the Council of *Latèran* a General one? Or was the Council of *Sardica*? If it was, let him shew how the 2d. of *Nice* could be the 7th. *General Council*. Mr. *White* must write more explicitly, and say which are *General Councils*, which not, otherwise he will lead his friends into dangerous mistakes.

§ 4. *After ancient Councils* (not so ancient neither) let us (says he) give a glance at Fathers. Glince is a modest word, and yet I doubt whether ever the *Fathers* had so much as that from him. Before I speak particularly to his Testimonies from the *Fathers*, I shall mind him of what Mr. *Rusworth*

* Dial. 3.
Sect. 13.

* Ibid.

says in general, viz. * *That who seeks Tradition in the Fathers, and to convince it by their Testimony, takes an hard task upon him, &c.* Again *, *As in other Points, so even in this of the Resolution of Faith, as Doctors seem to differ now adays, so might the Fathers also.* If this be true, Mr. S. is not very likely by a few Testimonies out of the *Fathers* to prove that *Tradition* is the sole *Rule of Faith*. But let us see what he has done towards it.

He begins with a saying of Pope Celestine to the Fathers of the *Ephesian Council*. Now therefore we must act with a common endeavor to preserve things believed, and retained to this very time by Succession from the Apostles. Binnius's other Reading [of *ἡ δὲ ἀρχὴ* for *ἡ δὲ ἀρχὴ*] quite spoils the force of this Citation which Mr. S. puts upon the word *Succession*. But read it how he will; why may not the Christian Doctrine be said to come by Succession from the Apostles, when it is transmitted to us by Scripture, as well as when by oral Tradition? I am sure the same Celestine in an Epistle to Cyril, commends him for defending the Faith by Scripture, This (says he) is

a great Triumph of our Faith, to demonstrate our Opinions so strongly, and to overthrow the contrary by Testimonies from Scripture. And neither in this Epistle, nor the other, does he make any mention of Oral Tradition.

Next he cites that known place in Irenæus, *But what if the Apostles had not left us the Scriptures, ought we not to follow the Order of Tradition, &c.*? This makes clearly against him; for it implies, that now the Apostles have left us the Scriptures, we ought to follow them. The other passage he cites out of Irenæus, *Lib. 1. c. 3.* is a clear eviſion that he did not consult the Book. For he puts two sayings together which he had met with in Mr. White immediately one after the other; and because Mr. White had cited *Lib. 1. c. 3.* for the first saying, and brought in the other immediately upon it with an (*Et rursus*) *Again, &c.* Therefore Mr. S. (who is of a right Traditionary temper, which is to take things easily upon trust himself, and require Demonstration from others) concluded that these sayings were in the same place, though in truth they are in several Books. As for the

Testimony it self, there is nothing in it to Mr. S's purpose besides the word *Tradition*, which *Irenaeus* does often apply to Scripture as well as *Oral Tradition*; and there is nothing in this place to determine it to *Oral Tradition*.

His Testimonies out of *Origen* will do him less stead: For every one that hath been conversant in the Writings of that *Father*, knows what he means by the *Churches Tradition* preserved by order of *Succession*, viz. The mystical Interpretations of Scripture, which (he says) were delivered by the Apostles to the Governors of the Church, and by them down from hand to hand. If this be the *Tradition* Mr. S. contends for, *Origen* is at his service; if it be not, I assure him he is not for his turn.

Next comes *Tertullian*, concerning whom (as also *Origen*) the Papist upon occasion thinks it enough to reply in *St. Hierom's* words*, *As for Tertullian, I have nothing to say of him but that he is not a man of the Church*. Whatever he was, these are his words, *If thou beest but a Christian, believe what is [traditum] deliver'd*. And here's nothing again but the word *deliver'd*;

* Advers.
Helvid.

liver'd; which (as I have said) is indifferent to *Written* or *Oral Tradition*, if the Circumstances do not determine it to one; as here they do (very unluckily for Mr. S.) to the *Scripture*. For he disputes here against *Marcion*, who denied the Flesh of Christ; and who to maintain that, denied his Nativity, and * expunged the whole History of it out of the Gospel; *But* (saith *Tertullian*) *by what authority dost thou do this? If thou be a Prophet, foretell something; If an Apostle, preach publicly; If Apostolical, be of the Apostle's mind; If no more but a Christian, believe what is delivered.* And where delivered? But in those *Instruments* or Books of the Gospel out of which (as *Tertullian* immediately before tells us) *Marcion* had made bold to expunge this Story.

* His opinion
nor consiliis
tot Origina-
lia Instrumenta
Christi de-
lere Mar-
cion ausus
est, ne Caro-
ejus proba-
retur. Ex
qua, oro te,
autoritate,
&c.

As for his Testimonies out of *Athanasius*, the two first of them prove nothing but that *Faith comes down from our Ancestors*, or was by them *delivered to us*; which no body denies: Nor is there a word in either of them concerning *oral*, in opposition to *written Tradition*. The third Testimony is out of an
Epistle

Epistle to Epictetus, to whom Athanasius writing concerning those who held Christ's Body to be Consubstantial with his Divinity, tells him this was so gross a conceit that it needed no solicitous confutation; but that it would be a sufficient answer to say in general the Orthodox Church was not of that mind, our Fathers did not think so. From whence Mr. S. infers that Tradition is held by him a sole sufficient Rule of Faith, and the only Answer to be given why we reject Points from Faith, &c. But if he had consulted the Book, he would not have inferred that this was the only Answer to be given, &c. For it immediately follows, But lest from our being wholly silent, these Inventers of evil things should take occasion to be more impudent, it will be good to recite a few passages out of Scripture, &c. And from thence he confutes them at large. It was so gross an Error that he thought it might be sufficient, without bringing particular arguments out of Scripture against it, to say that it was contrary to the ancient Faith; but yet lest they should (if he had said no more) have taken boldness from thence, and thought that nothing more could be

be said against it, therefore he confutes it from particular Texts of Scripture. And what in his opinion was the *sufficient Rule of Faith*, Mr. S. might have seen at the beginning of this *Epistle* from these words, *That Faith which was professed by the Fathers in that Council (viz. the Nicene) according to the Scriptures, is to me sufficient, &c.* It seems that Scripture was to him the Rule and Standard whereby to judg even the *Creeeds* of General Councils.

Mr. S. says he will be shorter in the rest, and so will I. For what is to be said to Testimonies brought at a venture? when he that brings them, had he read the Books themselves, could not have had the face to have brought them. Such is this out of * *Clem. Alexand.* *As if* ^{Stromat.} *one of a Man becomes a Beast, like those* ^{L. 7.} *infected with Circes poyson; so he hath forfeited his being a Man of God and faithful to our Lord, who spurns against Ecclesiastical Tradition, and leaps into Opinions of human Election.* Mr. S. knows whose way of quoting this is, to pick a bit out of the midst of a Text that sounds something towards his purpose, and leave out the rest which would

would make it evident to be meant just contrary. Yet I cannot charge this wholly upon Mr. *S.* whose implicit Faith were it not for his culpable Ignorance might excuse him. But for his Seducer Mr. *White*, how he can acquit himself of so foul an Imputation, I leave it to any ingenuous Papist to judge when I have nakedly set the whole passage before him. *Clemens* speaking of Hereticks who relinquish the Scripture, or abuse it by wresting it to their lusts, says, *Men who deal in matters of highest importance must needs commit great Errors, if they do not take and hold the RULE OF TRUTH from Truth it self.* For such men having once deviated from the right way, do likewise err in most particulars; probably because they have not the Faculty of distinguishing Truths and Falshoods perfectly exercised to choose what ought to be chosen. For if they had this, they would be ruled by the Divine SCRIPTURES. [Therefore as if any of Mankind should become a Beast, in such sort as those who were bewitched by Circe; even so he hath lost his being a Man of God and abiding faithful to the Lord, who hath spurned against

* *caquax*
dnor.

against the Tradition of the Church, and
 skipt into the Opinions of human Sects*,] ^{* ἀσπίστον.}
 (not of human Election, as Mr. S. blind-
 ly following Mr. Wh. does most absurdly
 translate it), but he that hath returned
 from his Errors, and hearkned to the
 SCRIPTURES, and conformed his life
 to the Truth, is as it were advanced from
 a Man to a God. At the same rate he
 goes on for several Pages together, tak-
 ing the Scriptures for an *indemonstrable*
Principle, from which all Divine Do-
 ctrines are to be demonstrated, and for
 the *Criterion* whereby they are to be
 tried; and charges the Hereticks in such
 words as we cannot find fitter for our
 Adversaries, As (says he) *naughty*
Boys shut out their School-master, so these
drive the Prophecies out of the Church,
suspecting that they will chide and admon-
ish them; and they patch together abun-
dance of falsehoods and fictions that they
may seem RATIONALLY not to admit
the Scriptures. Again, speaking of these
 Hereticks affronting the Scriptures, he
 tells us they oppose the ** Divine Tradi-*
*tion with human Doctrines * by other*
Traditions [delivered from hand to hand]
that they may establish a Sect or Heresie.

<sup>* διὰ τὴν
 παρὰ τὴν
 πρὸς τὸν
 Θεὸν
 παραδο-</sup>

Again .

Again he says, *they adulterate the Truth, and steal the Rule of Faith, &c. but for ORAL Frauds they shall have WRITTEN Punishments.* But enough of this; whosoever desires to see more of it, let him read on where these men to their shame have directed us, and see whether any Protestant can speak more fully and plainly in this Controversy. The whole trust of the Papists is upon the equivocal sense of the word *Tradition*. Which word is commonly used by the *Fathers* to signify to us the Scriptures or *Divine Tradition* as *Clement* here calls it; but the *Papists* understand it of their *unwritten Tradition*, and to this they apply all those passages in the *Fathers* where Tradition is honourably mentioned. So Mr. S. deals with us, in the Testimonies I have already examined: And there is nothing of argument in those few which remain but from the ambiguity of this Word; which I need not shew of every one of them in particular, for whosoever shall read them with this Key will find that they are of no force to conclude what he drives at.

§ 5. As for his Citations out of the Council of *Trent*, by which he would prove it to be the perswasion of their present

present Church, that *Tradition* is the sole *Rule of Faith*; I have already shewn that that Council hath declared otherwise, and is otherwise understood by the chief of their own *Writers*, And therefore he did prudently to conceal in an &c. those choaking words, in which the *Council* declares itself to *receive and honour, with equal pious affection and reverence, the Books of Scripture and unwritten Traditions*. And after a great deal of shuffling, what a pitiful Account is it that he at last gives of that Council's putting Scripture constantly before *Tradition*, because Scripture being interpreted by *Tradition*, is of the same Authority *as if an Apostle or Evangelist were present, and therefore no wonder they honour Scripture-Testimony so as to put it before Tradition*; which is to say, that because Scripture is subordinate to *Tradition* and to be regulated by it, therefore it deserves to be put before it. Besides if *Scripture and Tradition* be but several wayes of conveying the Evangelical and Apostolical Doctrine, why should he imagine an *Evangelist* or *Apostle* to be more present by the Scripture than by

by *oral Tradition*? Especially if it be considered, that he supposes Scripture to be an uncertain, and Tradition an infallible way of conveying this Doctrine.

SECT. II.

Testimonies on the behalf of Scripture.

§ 1. **A**Ll that now remains, is to confirm the precedent *Discourse* by Testimonies of the most eminent Persons of the Church, in several Ages. in which I shall not need to be large, being so happily prevented by that full Account which is given of the sense of the *Ancients* in this matter, in the *Answer to Labyrinthus Cantuariensis*; which Mr. S. may if he pleases consult for his further Conviction.

§ 2. I begin with the Historical Account which *Eusebius* gives of committing the Gospel to writing; which is to this purpose, viz *. *That the Romans were not content with the Doctrine Preached, unless it were also committed to writing; and therefore did earnestly beg of Mark, Peter's Companion, that he would leave them a Monument in writing of that Doctrine which had been deliver'd to them*

* Histor.
Eccles. l. 2.
c. 14.

them by word of mouth. And this was the occasion of the writing of St. Mark's Gospel. And when Peter did understand that this Work was publish'd (being suggested by the Divine Revelation of the Holy Spirit) it is said he was very much pleased with the ready and earnest desire of those Persons; and that by his Authority he confirmed this Writing, to the end that it might be every where read in the Church. As for St. Matthew and St. John, he tells us *, * Ibid. l. 3. c. 18. That of all the Disciples they two only have left monuments in Writing; of whom it is also reported that they betook themselves to write, being drawn thereto by necessity. Matthew after he had preached the Word of God to the Jews, and was resolved to go to other Nations, wrote his Gospel in the Language of his Countrey; and thus by the diligence and pains of Writing, did abundantly supply the the want of his presence to those whom he left. And when Mark and Luke had published their Gospel, it is reported that John (who had always used to preach the Word without writing it) being at length wrought upon by the same reason did be-

take himself to write. From this account it is clear, that the Apostles thought it necessary for the preservation and secure conveyance of the Christian Doctrine, that it should be put into Writing; and that they judged this a better way to supply the want of their presence, than *oral Tradition*. Therefore

* Ibid. c. 31. the same *Author* tells us *, *That the Disciples, who immediately succeeded the Apostles, as they travelled to preach the Gospel to those who had not yet heard the Word of Faith, did with great care also deliver to them the Writings*

† Ibid. c. 30. *of the Holy Evangelists.* Again *, *That Ignatius as he travelled towards Rome (where he was to suffer) exhorted the Churches of every City to hold fast the Tradition of the Apostles; which (as also by Writing he testified) for greater security he held necessary to be copied in Writing.*

§ 4. That the Hereticks of Old made the same pretence which the Papists make now, of *oral Tradition* in opposition to *Scripture*, the same *Eusebius* tells us; and withal, that *Books* are a sufficient confutation of this pre-

pretence *. *Those (says he) who were of* ^{* Ibid. L. 5. c. 27.} *the Heresie of Artemon, said that all their Fore-fathers and the Apostles themselves had received and taught the same things which they also did; and had preserved the true Teaching unto the time of Victor Bishop of Rome, whose Successor Zephyrinus corrupted it. And this (saith he) would have great probability, were it not first of all contradicted by the Scripture; and next if there did not remain the Writings of other Brethren much more ancient than Victor's time, &c. in the Books of all whom Christs Divinity is acknowledged. And afterwards he tells us that these Hereticks did change and corrupt the Scriptures to bring them to their Opinions; so Mr. S. tells us that the outward Letter of Scripture ought to be corrected by Tradition and Sense written in mens hearts.*

St. Hierom also tells us *, *That the* ^{* Comment. in Isai. c. 19.} *Hereticks were wont to say, we are the Sons of the Wise, who did from the beginning deliver down to us the Apostolical Doctrine; but he adds, that the true Sons of Judah adhere to the Scripture.*

§ 4. That Scripture is sufficiently plain in all things necessary.

* In 2 Thef. c. 2. Hom. 4. St. Chrysostome *, *All things in the Divine Scriptures are plain and straight. Whatsoever things are necessary are manifest.*

* Epist. 3. St. Austin having spoken of the profoundness of Scripture, adds *, *Not that those things which are necessary to Salvation are so hard to be come at: But (saith he) when one hath there attained Faith without which there is no pious and right living, there are besides, many dark and mysterious things, &c.* Again *,

* Ibid. *The manner of speech in Scripture how easie is it to all, though few can penetrate to the bottom of it? Those things which it plainly contains, it speaks without disguise like a familiar Friend to the heart of the learned and unlearned. How will Mr. S. reconcile this with his grand Exception against Scripture? And what these things are, which are plainly contained in Scripture, the same Father tells us else-where, in these words *,* Among those things which are plainly set down in Scripture, all those things are to be found which comprehend Faith and good Manners. The same St. Austin (as also Clement

* De Doctr. Christ. L. 2. c. 9.

Clement in the Book which *Mr. White* quoted) for the understanding of obscure Texts of Scripture directs us not to *Tradition*, but to the plain Texts, without which he expressly says * *there would be no way to understand them.*

* *De Unitat. Eccles. c. 5.*

§ 5. That Scripture is so plain, as to be fit to determine Controversies.

Justin sure thought so, when disputing with *Trypho*, concerning a point wherein the *Jew* had *Tradition* on his side, he told him *he would bring such proofs* (to the contrary) *as no man could gain-say: Attend* (says he) *to what I shall recite out of the Holy Scriptures, proofs which need not to be explained, but only to be heard.* *Mr. White* might have found likewise much to this purpose in his *Clement*.

But not to tire my Reader in a Point which the Ancients abound with, I shall only produce the judgment of *Constantine* * in that solemn *Oration* of his to the Council of *Nice*; wherein he bewails their *mutual oppositions, especially in Divine things*; concerning which they had the *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit Recorded in Writing*; For (says he) the Books

* *Theodor. Hist. L. 1. c. 7.*

of the Evangelists and Apostles, and the Oracles of the old Prophets, do evidently teach us what we ought to think of the Divine Majesty. Therefore laying aside all seditious contention, let us determine the matters in question by Testimonies out of the Divine Writings. Not a word of any other Tradition but Scripture, which was held evident enough in those days, though now Mr. S. tells us it is not sufficient to decide that Controversy about the Divinity of Christ.

§ 6. Lastly, That Scripture is the *Rule of Faith.*

* L. 3. c. 1.

*Irenæus * The method of our Salvation we have not known by any other but those men by whom the Gospel came to us, which then they preached, but afterwards by the Will of God delivered it to us in the Scriptures, to be for the future the foundation and pillar of our Faith.*

* P. 314.

* Dial. 3.
Sect. 13.

*St. Cyprian the Church hath ever held a good Catholick; yet Mr. S. * takes notice that he erred in a Point of Faith, and perhaps the rather because Mr. Rusworth * had told him that he was not theirs in this Controversy. For (says he) St. Cyprian seems to think that the*
Reso-

Resolution of Faith was to be made into Scripture, and not into Tradition. But that we may not seem to accept of this of courtesie from him, nor yet wholly to despise it, I shall offer this one Testimony instead of many out of that *Father*; who being opposed with an Argument from Tradition, demands *, *Whence* * Epist. 74. *have you that Tradition? Comes it from the Authority of the Lord, and of the Gospel, or from the Epistles of the Apostles? For God testifies that we are to do those things which are written, &c. If it be commanded in the Gospel, or contained in the Epistles or Acts of the Apostles, then let us observe it as a Divine and Holy Tradition.*

Hilary * commends *Constantius* the * Ad Constant. Emperor for regulating his Faith only according to those things which are written. And to oblige him to deserve this commendation, he adds, *He who refuses this is Antichrist, and who dissembles in it is Anathema.*

* *Optatus*, concerning the Controversy with the *Donatists*, asks who shall be Judge? and answers himself, *the Scriptures*: Which he illustrates by the similitude of a Father who delivered his

* Lib. 5.
de Schism.
Donat.

Will orally to his children while he was living, but when he was dying caused it to be written *in lasting Tables*, to decide all Controversies that might happen among them after his death. The passage is large, and it is obvious to apply it.

* De Sp.
Sancto c. 7.

Basil maintaining the *Doxology* as it was used in his days, says *, *Thus we received it from our Fathers*; but adds immediately, *This is not enough for us, that it is the Tradition of the Fathers, for they followed the Authority of the Scriptures, making its Testimonies the Principles upon which they built.* He has indeed in the same *Book* * a passage much insisted on by the Papists concerning unwritten Traditions; but withal he says those Traditions were *secretly* conveyed, which makes all the rest of no use to Mr. S.

* C. 27.

* Hom. 8. in
Epist. ad
Heb. c. 5.

Chrysostom * having mentioned several Heresies, directs how they may be avoided, viz. *By attending to the Faith delivered, and looking upon all that disagrees from that as adulterate.* For (says he) as those who give Rules do not put men upon a curious enquiry after many measures, but bid them

them keep to the Rule given; so is it in Opinions. But no body will attend to the Scriptures; if we did, we should not only not fall into Errors our selves, but also rescue those that are deceived. Again *, If we would be thoroughly conversant in the Scriptures, we should be instructed both in right Opinions and a good life. Again, among the many Sects of Christians * it will be easie to judge of the right, if we believe the Scriptures, because these are plain and true; If any one agree with these, he is a Christian; if he contradict them, he is far from this Rule.

* Hom. 52.
in Joh.

* Hom. 33.
in Act.
Apost.

St. Austin calls the Scripture * the Divine Balance for the weighing of Doctrines. Again, the Holy Scripture (sayes he) fixeth the Rule of our Doctrine. And accordingly himself uses it both in his Dispute with Maximinus, to whom he sayes *, Neither ought I now to alledge the Nicene Council, nor thou that of Arminium; for neither am I bound to the Authority of the one, nor thou of the other. Let us both contest with the Authorities of Scripture which are Witnesses common to us both.

* De Bapt.
Contr. Do-
nat. L. 2.
c. 6.

* Contr.
Max. L. 3.

And

* De Uni-
tat. Ecclef.
c. 16.

And alfo againſt the *Donatiſts* in theſe words *, *Let them if they can demonſtrate their Church not by the Talk and Rumors [or oral Tradition] of the Africans, not by the Councils of their own Biſhops, not by the Books of their Diſputers, not by deceitful Miracles, &c, but by the preſcript of the Law, Prophets, &c. i. e. by all the Canonical Authorities of the Holy Books.*

* Com-
ment. in
Agg. c. 1.

Hierom ſaith *, *Of thoſe things, which without the Authorities and Testimonies of the Scripture men invent of their own heads as from Apoſtolicall Tradition, they are ſmitten with the Sword of God.*

* Paſchal.
L. 3.

*, L. 2.

Theophilus Alexandr. whom Hierom hath Translated, calls Scripture more than once * *the Rule*, and the Testimonies of it the *firm foundations of Doctrine*. And again ſaith *, *It comes from a Demonical ſpirit that men follow the Sophiſms of humane minds, and think any thing Divine that wants the Authority of Scripture.*

* Hæret.
Fabul. L. 5.

Theodoret * charges all Heresies upon the not following of Scripture, which he calls *the inflexible Rule of Truth*. Again, *We have have learned the Rule of*

of Opinions from the Divine Scripture.

After the Fathers, I shall produce the Testimonies of two Eminent Persons of latter Times, Gerson and Lyra.

Gerson in his * *Book of the Tryal of* ^{Part 1;} *Doctrines*, hath this remarkable passage; ^{Confid. 2;}
*In the Tryal of Doctrines that which is first and principally to be considered is, Whether a Doctrine be conformable to the H. Scripture, &c. The reason of this is, because the Scripture is deliver'd to us as a SUFFICIENT and INFALLIBLE RULE for the Government of the whole Ecclesiastical Body and its Members to the end of the world. So that it is such an Art, such a Rule or Exemplar, that any other Doctrine which is not conformable to it, is to be renounc'd as Heretical, or to be accounted suspicious, or not at all appertaining to Religion. Again, * It is evident how pernicious the rejection of the H. Scripture is, and how certain a preparatory for the reception of Antichrist. Once more, * What mischief, what danger, what confusion hath happen'd thorough contempt of the H. Scripture, which sure is sufficient for the Government of the Church (else Christ must have been*

* De Distinct. Verrar. Vision, a falsis.

* Serm. in die Circumcis. &c.

an

an imperfect Law-giver) let us ask Experience; &c.

* Prolog. de
Lib. Bib.
&c.
Lib. Bib.

Lyra * also writes thus *; *As in Philosophy truth is discovered by reducing things to their first and self-evident Principles; so in the Writings deliver'd by the H. Doctors, Truth is discover'd as to matters of Faith, by reducing them to the Canonical Scriptures.*

Sir, You know how easy it were to swell up a large Volume, with Testimonies to this purpose; especially if I should take the course that Mr. Wh. does, to hale in quotations though never so impertinent; or use the wretched opportunity which Mr. S. does, to persuade them to be pertinent. But these Testimonies which I have nakedly set down, leaving them to speak for themselves, are enough to satisfy an unpassionate Reader, such an one as dares trust himself with the use of his own eyes and reason. As for that sort of men which chuses to follow noise rather than light, we must be content to leave them to the blind conduct of those Guides who, having no better means to keep their Followers

ers

ers to them, go halloing in the dark, and fill their ears with the insignificant sounds of Infallibility, Indefeetibility, Self-evidence and Demonstration.

Concerning the Appendix wherein you are particularly challeng'd, I hope for an Account very shortly, and so take leave,

S I R,

Your Affectionate

Friend,

JOHN TILLOTSON.

Lincolns-Inn,
Febr. 10.
1665.

FINIS.

R H P I Y

M A S S A C H U S E T T S

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

State of Massachusetts

County of Suffolk

City of Boston

Ward of South Boston

For the purpose of the
City of Boston
and the County of Suffolk
in the State of Massachusetts

A
R E P L Y
T O

Mr. J. S. his 3^d APPENDIX,

Containing some

Animadversions

ON THE

B O O K

ENTITLED

A RATIONAL ACCOUNT of the

Grounds of

Protestant Religion.

By *Ed. Stillingfleet* B. D.

London, Printed by H.C. for Henry Mortlock
at the Sign of the *Phoenix* in St. Paul's
Church-yard near the little
North-door. 1675.

Y. I. 9. 4. 31

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Y. I. 9. 4. 31

Y. I. 9. 4. 31
Y. I. 9. 4. 31



An Appendix to the *Rule of Faith.*

To his honoured Friend Mr. *John Tillotson.*

SIR,

AS soon as I understood
your intentions to answer
Mr. *Serjeant*, I could not
but rejoice on his behalf,
as well as on the truths
and your own. For I have that real
kindness for him, that I heartily wish
him that reason and science he pretends
to; which I could not but despair of
his attaining, unless he were unde-
ceived in that monstrous opinion he

A

hath

§ 14

hath of himself and his undertakings. And I knew no person more fit than you, to let him understand the truth and himself together. In which, your performances have been so clear and satisfactory, that I hope Mr. *Sergeant*, instead of another Letter of directions to his Answerer, will write you one of thanks, for the reason and kindness you have shewed him throughout your Book. Unless it fares with you, as it hath done with some other *Adversaries* of theirs, that their civility hath been interpreted as an argument of their uncertainty, and their own confidence cried up for a demonstration. In which sense only I shall grant our *Protestant* Writers to build on uncertainties, and Mr. *White* and Mr. *Sergeant* to be the great *Demonstrators* of this age. If their own reason had been as severe as the censures at *Rome* against them, they had saved us the labour of any answer, and would have found out their own *sophistry* without a confutation. But the least thing we can imagine by their excessive confidence, is, that they are deceived themselves; and therefore it is a part of charity to them, as well as justice

Rule of Faith.

3

justice to the truth, to let the world see, that big words are quite another thing from science, and a strong presumption from a regular demonstration. As to which, no more need to have been said, than what you have already done; if Mr. *Serjeant* had not thought it an accession to the glory of his achievements; to lead two Pages of my Book in triumph after him. I confess, I was somewhat surprized to see a person who would be noted for his valour in assaulting *Protestant* Writers, steal so behind the main bulk and design of my Book; and when he had gotten two single Pages by themselves, fall upon them with as much pomp and ostentation, as if he had attack'd the whole. And this must be noised abroad as an *Answer* to me, by the same figure that his arguments are called demonstrations, which is by an *hyperbole* unfit for any, but such *who never flag below the sphere of Science* in their own judgments, though they seem not to come near it in others. Yet since Mr. *Serjeant* is not only pleased to concern himself so far as to answer that part of my Book relating to oral tra-

An Appendix to the

p. 236.

dition ; but in most exprefs terms to challenge me to reply to him, he may now fee (asfoon as I could get any liberty from greater imployments) how ready I am to give him all reasonable fatisfaction. And in the first place, I return him thanks for the weapon he hath made choice of, *viz.* that of *reason* ; there being no other I desire to make use of, in managing this debate between us : And I hope he will find as much civility towards him throughout this discourse, as he expresses towards me in the entrance to his ; if that may be accounted any real civility, which is intended meerly out of design, with the greater advantage to disparage the cause I have undertaken, and yet see no reason to repent of. *If in his cursory view of two Chapters of my Book he had* (as he saith) *quite lost me*, he had no cause to be troubled for it, if he had found far more excellent persons, *such as Dr. Hammond, and the Disswader, and Dr. Pierce, instead of me.* But to be sure, he intends not this in honour to any of us, but by way of a common reproach to us all, as though *we did not talk out of nature or things, but words*
and

p. 202.

and imagination. I could heartily have wished, Mr. S. would have *cropt so much of the victory due to anothers learning and industry*, as to have shewed me one proposition in those discourses, *which a rational understanding, that would be true to it self, could not settle or rely on.* But if such insinuations as these must pass for answers, I must needs say, I judg M. S. equally happy in confuting our grounds, and in demonstrating his own; in both which, his greatest strength lies in the *self-evidence* of his bare affirmations. But it seems he is willing to resign the glory of this *Victory* to the *judicious Author of Labyrinthus Cantuariensis*, or to some others for him; and when they have once obtained it; I shall not envy them the honour of it. And I suppose those persons, whoever they are, may be able by this time, to tell Mr. S. it is an easier matter to talk of *Victories* than to get them. But if they do no more in the whole, than Mr. S. hath done for his share, they will triumph no-where, but where they conquer, *viz.* in their own fancies and imaginations. Therefore leaving them to their silent conquests, and as yet, un-

heard-of Victories, we come to Mr. S. who so liberally preclaims his own in the point of oral tradition. *Which* (in a phrase scarce heard of in our language before) *is the Post*, he tells us, *he hath taken upon him to explicate further and defend.* What the *explicating a Post* means, I as little understand, as I do the force of his demonstrations; but this, and many other such uncouth forms of speech, up and down in his Book (which make his style so smooth and easie), are I suppose intended for embellishments of our tongue, and as helps to *sure-speaking*, as his whole Book is designed for *sure-footing*.

§. 2.

¶. 203.

But letting him enjoy the pleasure and felicity of his own expressions, I come to consider the matter in debate between us. And his first controversie with me, is, *for opposing the infallibility of oral tradition, to doctrinal infallibility in Pope and Councils.* A controversie fitter to be debated among themselves, than between him and me: For is any thing more notorious, than that *infallibility* is by the far greatest part of *Romanists* attributed to the present Church,

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Church, in teaching and delivering matters of faith, not by virtue of any oral tradition, but the immediate assistance of the *Holy Ghost*; and that this is made by them the only ground of divine faith? For which Mr. S. may if he please, consult his *judicious Author* of *Labyrinthus Cantuariensis*, or any other of their present Writers, except Mr. *White* and *himself*. He need not therefore have been to seek for the meaning of this doctrinal infallibility, as opposed to traditionary, if he had not either been ignorant of the opinion of their own Writers, or notoriously dissembled it. For this infallibility is not attributed to the Rulers of the Church, meerly as *Doctors* or *Scholars*, but as the representative *Church*, whose office it is, to deliver all matters of faith by way of an infallible testimony to every age, and thereby to afford a sufficient foundation for divine faith. But Mr. S. attributes no such infallibility to the representative Church, as teaching the rest, but derives their infallibility from such grounds as are common to all parts of the essential Church. Wherein he apparently opposes himself

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to the whole current of their own Authors, who resolve all faith into the immediate assistance of the Holy Ghost; without which, they assert, there could be no infallibility at all in tradition, or any thing else; and therefore these opinions are as opposite to each other as may be. For such an infallibility is not attributed by them to the Teachers of the Church, meerly on some signal occasions, as Mr. S. seems to suppose, when they are to explain new matters of faith; but it is made by them to be as necessary as believing it self, because thereby the only sure foundation of faith is laid; and therefore it is very evident, they make it proper to the Church in all ages: Or else in some age of the Church men were destitute of sufficient grounds of faith. For they by no means think it a sufficient foundation for faith, that one age of the Church could not conspire to deceive another; for this they will tell him, at most, is but a humane faith; but that Christ by his promise hath assured the Church, that there shall never be wanting in it the infallible assistance of his Holy Spirit, whereby they shall infallibly

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bly teach and deliver all matters of faith. And if this be not their opinion, let them speak to the contrary, which if they do, I am sure they must retract their most elaborate discourses about the resolution of faith, written by the greatest Artists among them. Let Mr. S. then judg, *who it is that stumbles at the Threshold*; but of this difference among them, more afterwards. By this it appears, it was not on any mistake that I remained unsatisfied in the Question I asked, *Whether am I bound to believe what the present Church delivers to be infallible?* To which Mr. S. answers, *I understand him not.* My reply shall be only that of a great Lawyers in a like case, *I cannot help that.* I am sure my words are intelligible enough; for I take *infallible* there as he takes it himself, for *infallibly true*; although I deny not the word to be improperly used in reference to things; and that for the reason given by him, *because fallibility & infallibility belong to the knowing power, or the persons that have it, and not to the object.* But we are often put to the use of that word in a sense we acknowledg improper, meerly

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merely in compliance with our Adversaries, who otherwise are apt to charge us with having only uncertainties and probabilities for our faith; if we do not use the term *infallible* as applied to the truth of the thing. I am content therefore wherever, in what I have writ, he meets that term so applied, that he take it only in his own sense, for that which is *certainly true*; for I mean no more by it. And in this sense Mr. S. answers affirmatively, and gives this account of it, *not only because the present Church cannot be deceived in what the Church of the former age believed, but because the Church in no age could conspire against her knowledg to deceive that age immediately following in matter of fact, evident in a manner to the whole world.* The Question then is, whether this be a sufficient account for me to believe that to be certainly true, or to be the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, which the present Church delivers? and consequently, whether the resolution of faith be barely into oral tradition?

§. 3.

Thus we see the clear state of the Question between us. I come therefore

fore to the vindication of those things which I had objected against this way of resolving faith into oral tradition.

Three things I especially insisted on :

1. That it is inconsistent with the pretensions of the present *Roman* Church.
2. That it hath not been the way owned in all ages of the Christian Church.
3. That it is repugnant to common sense and experience, and that the Church of *Rome* hath apparently altered from what was the belief of former ages. If these three be made good, there will be no cause to *glory* in this last invention, to support the sinking fabrick of that Church. These three then I undertake to defend against what Mr. *Serjeant* hath objected against them.

1. That it is contrary to the pretensions of the present *Roman* Church. And if it be so, there can be no reason for those who are of it, to rely upon it. For if so be that Church pretends, that the obligation to faith arises from a quite different ground from this; how can they who believe that Church infallible, venture their faith upon any other principle than what is publicly owned by

by her? And whosoever thinks himself bound to believe by virtue of an infallible assistance of the present Church, doth thereby shew, that his obligation doth not depend upon what was delivered by the former ages of the Church. As those who believed the Apostles were infallible in their doctrine, could not resolve their faith into the infallibility of oral tradition, but into that immediate assistance by which the Apostles spake; and where there is a belief of a like assistance, the foundation of faith cannot ly in the indefectibility of tradition, but in that infallible Spirit which they suppose the Church to be assisted by. For supposing this oral tradition should fail, and that men might believe that it had actually failed; yet if the former supposition were true, there was sufficient ground for faith remaining still. And what assurance can any one have, that the present Church delivers nothing for matter of faith, but what hath been derived in every age from Christ and his Apostles, if such an infallible Spirit be supposed in the present Church which was in the Apostles themselves?
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For on the same reason that those who heard the Apostles were not bound to trouble themselves with the tradition of the former age; no more ought they who believe the present *Roman* Church to have the same infallible assistance. They need not then enquire, whether this age knew the meaning of the former, or whether one age could conspire to deceive another, or whether notwithstanding both these, errors might not come into the Church; it is sufficient for them, that the definitions of the present Church are infallible in all matters of faith. Therefore my demand was built on very good reason; *How can you assure me the present Church obliges me to believe nothing but only what, and so far as it received from the former Church?* And Mr. S's answer is far from being satisfactory, *That this appears by her manifest practice, never refusing communion to any man, that could approve himself to believe all the former age did.* For this may be resolved into a principle far different from this, which is the belief of the infallibility of the present Church. For supposing, that they

they are not bound to enquire themselves into the reasons why the tradition could not fail in any age ; it is sufficient for them to believe the Church infallible ; and if it be so, in proposing matters of faith, it must be so in declaring what the belief of the former age was. But my demands go on, *What evidence can you bring to convince me both that the Church always observed this rule, and could never be deceived in it ?* Which question is built on these two Principles which the infallibility of oral tradition stands on: 1. That the Church must always go upon this ground. 2. That if it did so, it is impossible she should be deceived. Both which are so far from that *self-evidence* which M. Serjeant still pretends to in this way, that the *Jesuits* principles seem much more rational and consistent, than these do. For granting them but that one *Postulatum*, that there must be an inherent infallibility in the testimony of the present Church, to afford sufficient foundation for divine faith, all the rest of their doctrine follows naturally from it. Whereas this new way of resolving faith is built
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on such suppositions, which no man well in his wits will be ready to grant. For unless it be *self-evident* that the Church did always proceed on this ground, it cannot be *self-evident* that oral tradition is infallible; because the *self-evidence* of this principle depends on this, that in all ages of the Church, the only rule and measure of faith, was what was delivered by oral tradition from the age foregoing. Now if it be possible, that matters of faith might be conveyed in ways quite different from this, what *self-evidence* can there be, that the Church much always proceed upon this? Mr. S. then, must demonstrate it impossible for matters of faith to be conveyed to posterity in any other way than oral tradition; and not only that the thing is impossible, but that the Church in all ages judged it to be so; or else he can never make it at all evident, that the Church always made this her rule of faith. But if either there may be a certain conveyance of the doctrine of faith another way, *viz.* by writing, or that the Church might judge that way more certain, whether it were so or not, either

ther way it will appear far enough from *self-evidence*, that she always judged of doctrines of faith, meerly by the tradition of the preceding age. If another way be granted possible, there must be clear demonstration, that the Church notwithstanding this, did never make use of it; for if it did make use of another way of resolving faith in any age of the Church, then in that age of the Church oral tradition was not looked on as the ground of faith; and if so, notwithstanding whatever Mr. S. can demonstrate to the contrary, that age might have believed otherwise than the immediately preceding did. For let us but suppose, that all necessary doctrines of faith were betimes recorded in the Church, in Books universally received by the Christians of the first ages; is it not possible, that age which first embraced these Books, might deliver them to posterity as the rule of their faith, and so down from one age to another; and doth it not hence follow, that the rule of faith is quite different from a meer oral tradition? Let Mr. S. then either shew it impossible, that the do-
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Crines of faith should be written; or that being written, they should be universally received; or that being universally received in one age, they should not be delivered to the next; or being delivered to the next, those Books should not be looked on as containing the rule of faith in them; or though they were so, yet, that still oral tradition was wholly relied on as the rule of faith; and then I shall freely grant that Mr. S. hath attempted something towards the proof of this new *hypothesis*. But as things now stand, it is so far from being *self-evident*, that the Church hath always gone upon this principle, that we find it looked on as a great novelty among them in their own Church; and it would be a rare thing, for a new invention to have been the sense of the Church in all ages; which if it hath been, the strength of it is thereby taken away.

But let us suppose that the Church did proceed upon this principle, *that nothing was to be embraced, but what was derived by tradition from the Apostles*; how doth it thence follow, that

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§ 4.

nothing could be admitted into the Church but what was really so derived from them? Do we not see in the world at this day, that among those who own this principle, contradictory propositions are believed; and both sides tell us, it is on this account, because their doctrine was delivered by the *Apostles*? doth not the *Greek Church* profess to believe on the account of tradition from the *Apostles* as well as the *Latin*? If that tradition failed in the *Greek Church*, which was preserved in the *Latin*, either Mr. S. must instance on his own principles in that age which conspired to deceive the next, or he must acknowledg, that while men own tradition they may be deceived in what the foregoing age taught them; and consequently those things may be admitted as doctrines coming from the *Apostles* which were not so, and some which did may be lost, and yet the pretence of tradition remain still. What *self-evidence* then can there be in this principle, when two parts of the Church may both own it, and yet believe contradictions on the account of it? It is then worth
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our enquiring, what *self-evidence* this is which Mr. S. speaks so much of, which is neither more nor less, *but that men in all ages had eyes, ears, and other senses, also common reason, and as much memory as to remember their own names and frequently inculcated actions.* Which is so very reasonable a *postulatum*, that I suppose none who enjoy any of these will deny it. Let us therefore see how he proceeds upon it. *If you disprove this, I doubt we have lost mankind, the subject we speak of; and till you disprove it, neither I, nor any man in his wits can doubt, that this rule depending on testifying, that is, sense or experience, can possibly permit men to be deceivable.* Big words indeed; but such as evidence that all men who are in their wits do not constantly use them. For I pray Sir, what doth Mr. S. think of the *Greek Church*? Had not those in it eyes, ears, and other senses, as well as in the *Latin*? Do not they pretend and appeal to what they received from their *Fore-fathers* as well as the *Latins*? It seems then a deception is possible in the case of testifying, and therefore this doth more *than permit men to be deceivable*; for here hath

been an actual deception on one side or other. But we need not fear *losing mankind in this*; for the possibility of error supposeth mankind to continue still; and if we take away that, we may sooner lose it than by the contrary. But what repugnancy can we imagine to humane nature, that men supposing doctrines of faith to come down from *Christ* or his *Apostles*, should yet mistake in judging what those doctrines are? Had not men eyes, and ears, and common sense in *Christ* and the *Apostles* times? And yet we see even then the doctrine of *Christ* was mistaken; and is it such a wonder it should be in succeeding ages? Did not the *Nazarenes* mistake in point of circumcision, the *Corinthians* as to the resurrection, and yet the mean time agree in this, that *Christ's* doctrine was the rule of faith, or that they ought to believe nothing but what came from him? Did not the Disciples themselves err, even while they were with *Christ*, and certainly had eyes, and ears, and common sense as other men have, concerning some great articles of Christian faith, viz. *Christ's* passion, resurrection, and the nature

ture of his Kingdom? If then such who had the greatest opportunities imaginable, and the highest apprehensions of *Christ*, might so easily mistake in points of such moment, what ground have we to believe, that succeeding ages should not be liable to such misapprehensions? And it was not meerly the want of clear divine revelation which was the cause of their mistakes; for these things were plain enough to persons not possessed with prejudices; but those were so strong as to make them apprehend things quite another way than they ought to do. So it was then, and so it was in succeeding ages; for let Parents teach what they pleased for matters of faith, yet prejudice and liableness to mistake in Children, might easily make them misapprehend either the nature or weight of the doctrines delivered to them. So that setting aside a certain way of recording the matters of faith in the Books of *Scripture*, and these preserved entire in every age, it is an easie matter to conceive, how in a short time *Christian Religion* would have been corrupted as much as ever any was in the world.

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For when we consider how much notwithstanding *Scripture*, the pride, passion, and interests of men have endeavoured to deface *Christian Religion* in the world, what would not these have done, if there had been no such certain rule to judge of it by? Mr. S. imagines himself *in repub. Platonis*, but it appears he is still *in facie Romuli*; he fancies there never were, nor could be any differences among *Christians*, and that all *Christians* made it their whole business to teach their posterity matters of faith, and that they minded nothing in the world but the imprinting that on their minds that they might have it ready for their Children; and that all Parents had equal skill and fidelity in delivering matters of *Religion* to their posterity. Whereas in truth, we find in the early ages of the *Christian Church* several differences about matters of faith, and these differences continued to posterity, but all parties still pleading that their doctrine came from the *Apostles*; & it fell out unhappily for Mr. S. that those were commonly most grossly deceived who pretended the most to oral tradition from the *Apostles*;
still

still we find the grand debate was, what came from the *Apostles*, and what not? whereas had tradition been so infallible a way of conveying, how could this ever have come into debate among them? What, did not they know what their Parents taught them? It seems they did not, or their Parents were no more agreed than themselves; for their differences could never be ended this way. Afterwards came in for many ages such a succession of ignorance and barbarism, that *Christian Religion* was little minded either by Parents or *Children*, as it ought to have been; instead of that, some fopperies and superstitions were hugely in request, and the men who fomented these things were cried up as great *Saints* and workers of miracles. So that the miracles of *S. Francis* and *S. Dominick* were as much, if not more carefully conveyed from Parents to Children in that age, than those of *Christ* and his *Apostles*; and on this account posterity must be equally bound to believe them, and have their persons in equal veneration. If men at last were grown wiser, it was because they did not be-

lieve Mr. S's principles, that they ought to receive what was delivered by their Parents; but they began to search and enquire into the writings of former ages, and to examine the opinions and practices of the present, with those of the primitive Church, and by this means there came a restoration of *Learning* and *Religion* together.

6. 5.

But though matters of fact be plain and evident in this case, yet M. S. will prove it impossible there should any errors come into the *Christian Church*; and his main argument is this, *because no age of the Church could conspire against her knowledg to deceive that age immediately following, in matter of fact, evident in a manner to the whole world.* But before I come, more particularly, to shew the weakness of this argument, by manifesting how errors might come into the Church without such a conspiracy as this is, I shall propound some *Queries* to him. 1. What age of the *Church* he will instance in, wherein all persons who were not cast out of the *Church*, had the same apprehensions

hensions concerning all points of faith *i. e.* that none among them did believe more things delivered by Christ or the *Apostles* than others did. I am sure he can neither instance in the age of the *Apostles* themselves, nor in those immediately succeeding them; unless Mr. S. the better to defend his *hypothesis*, will question all written records, because they consist of *dead letters*, and *unsenc't characters*, and *wordish testimonies*. Never considering, that while he utters this, he writes himself; unless he imagins there is more of *life*, *sense*, and *certainty* in his *Books*, than in the *Scriptures* or any other writing whatsoever. 2. Where there were different apprehensions in one age of the Church, whether there must not be different traditions in the next? For as he looks on all Parents as bound to teach their Children, so on Children as bound to believe what their Parents teach them. On which supposition different traditions in the succeeding age must needs follow, different apprehensions in the precedent. 3. Whether persons agreeing in the substance of doctrines may not differ in their
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apprehensions of the necessity of them? As for instance, all may agree in the article of Christs descent into Hell, but yet may differ in the explication of it, and in the apprehension of the necessity of it in order to salvation. So that we must not only in tradition about matters of faith enquire, what was delivered, but under what notion it was delivered; whether as an allowable opinion, or a necessary point of faith. But if several persons, nay multitudes in the Church may have different notions as to the necessity of the same points, by what means shall we discern what was delivered as an opinion in the Church, and what as an article of faith? But Mr. *S.* throughout his discourse takes it for granted, that there is the same necessity of believing and delivering all things which concern the Christian doctrine; and still supposes the same *sacredness, concern, necessity*, in delivering all the points in controverſie between the *Romanists* and Us, as there was in those main articles of faith, which they and we are agreed in. Which is so extravagant a sup-

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supposition, that it is hard to conceive it should ever enter into the head of a person pretending to reason; but as extravagant as it is, it is that without which his whole fabrick falls to the ground. For suppose we should grant him, that the infinite concerns which depend on the belief of the *Christian doctrine* should be of so prevalent nature with the world, that it is impossible to conceive any one age should neglect the knowing them, or conspire to deceive the next age about them; yet what is all this to the matters in difference between us? Will Mr. S. prove the same *sacredness, necessity, concern, and miraculously attestedness* (as he phrases it) in the *Invocation of Saints, Purgatory Transubstantiation, Supremacy, &c.* as in the believing the death and resurrection of the Son of God. If he doth not prove this, he doth nothing; for his arguments may hold for doctrines judged universally necessary, but for no other. Therefore Mr. S. hath a new task which he thought not of; which is, to manifest that these could not be looked on as *opinions*, but were embraced

braced as *necessary articles of faith*. For unless he proves them such, he can neither prove any obligation in Parents to teach them their *Children*, nor in *Children* to believe what their *Parents* taught, but only to hold them in the same degree which they did themselves. When Mr. S. will undertake to prove, that the whole *Church*, from the time of Christ, did agree in the points in difference between us, as *necessary articles of faith*, I may more easily believe, that no age could be ignorant of them, or offer to deceive the next about them. But when Mr. S. reflects on his frequent concession, that there are *private opinions* in the *Church*, distinct from *matters of faith*, he must remember, before he can bring home his grounds to the case between their *Church* and ours, that he must prove none of the things in debate, were ever entertained as *private opinions*, and that it is impossible for that which was a *private opinion* in one age, to become a *matter of faith* in the next.

§ 6.

But because this distinction of his
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ruins his whole demonstration, I shall first propound it in his own terms, and then shew how from thence it follows, that errors may come into the *Church*, and be entertained as matters of faith. His words are, *It being evident, that we have but two ways of ordinary knowledge, by acts of our soul, or operations on our body, that is, by reason and experience; the former of which belongs to Speculators or Doctors, the second to Deliverers of what was received, or Testifiers.* And this distinction he frequently admits, not only in the present age of the *Church*, but in any; for the same reason will hold in all. From hence I propose several *Queries* further to Mr. *S.* 1. If every one in the *Church* looked on himself as bound to believe just as the precedent age did, whence came any to have *particular opinions* of their own? For either the *Church* had delivered her sense in that case or not; if not, then tradition is no certain conveyer of the *doctrine* of *Christ*; if she had, then those who vented private speculations were *Hereticks* in so doing; because they opposed that doctrine which the *Church* received from
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Christ and his Apostles. If Mr. S. replies, that private speculations are in such cases where there is no matter of faith at all, he can never be able to help himself by that distinction in the case of his own Church; for I demand, whether is it a matter of faith, that men ought to believe oral tradition infallible? If not, how can men ground their faith upon it? If it be, then either some are meer *speculators* in matters of faith; or all who believe on the account of the *Popes infallibility* are *Hereticks* for so doing. 2. If there were *speculators* in former ages as well as this, whether did those men believe their own *speculations* or no? If not, then the *Fathers* were great *Impostors*, who vented those *speculations* in the Church which they did not believe themselves. And it is plain, Mr. S. speaks of such opinions which the asserters of, do firmly believe to be true: And if they did, then they look on themselves as bound to believe something which was not founded on the tradition of the Church; and consequently, did not own oral tradition, as the rule of faith. So that as many *speculators* as we find in the Church,

so many *testifiers* we have against the *infallibility* of *oral tradition*. 3. Whether those persons who did themselves believe those opinions to be true, did not think themselves obliged to tell others they ought to believe them; and consequently, to deliver these as matters of faith to their children? Let Mr. *J.* shew me any inconsequence in this; but that it unavoidably follows upon his principles, that they were bound to teach their Children what themselves received as the doctrine of Christ; and that the obligation is in all respects equal as if they had believed these things on the account of *oral tradition*.

4. If Children be obliged to believe what their Parents teach them for matters of faith, then upon Mr. *J.*'s, own concessions, is not posterity bound to believe something which originally came not from *Christ* or his *Apostles*? For it appears in this case, that the first rise was from a private opinion of some *Doctors* of the *Church*; but they believing these opinions themselves, think themselves obliged to propagate them to others; and by reason of their learning and authority, these opinions
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may by degrees gain a general acceptance in the ruling part of the *Church*; and all who believe them true, think they ought to teach them their *Children*; and Children they are to believe what their Parents teach them. Thus from Mr. S's own principles, things that never were delivered by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, may come to be received as matters of faith in the present *Church*. Thus the intelligent Reader needs no bodies help but Mr. S. to let him understand how *Invocation of Saints*, *Purgatory*, *Transubstantiation*, &c. though never delivered either by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, may yet now be looked on as articles of faith, and yet no age of the *Church* conspire to deceive another. Either then Mr. S. must say, there never were any *private opinators* or *speculators* in the *Church*, as distinct from *testifiers*, and then he unavoidably contradicts himself; or he must deny that posterity is bound to believe what their fore-fathers delivered them as matters of faith; which destroys the force of his whole demonstration. Perhaps he will answer, *that Children are not bound to believe*

lieve what barely their Parents, or any other number of persons might deliver as matters of faith, but what the whole Church of every age delivers. This, though the only thing to be said in the case, yet is most unreasonable, because it runs men upon inextricable difficulties in the way of their resolving faith. For suppose any Children taught by their Parents what they are to believe; Mr. S. must say, they are not bound to believe them presently, but to enquire whether they agree with the whole *Church* of that age first, before they can be obliged to assent. Which being an impossible task either for Children, or men of age, to find out in the way of oral tradition, this way of resolving faith, doth but offer a fairer pretence for infidelity. For we see, how impossible it is for Mr. S. to make it appear, that their *Church* is agreed about the rule of faith; for by his own confession, the far greater number as *speculators* oppose the way asserted by him; how much more difficult then must it needs be, to find out what the sense of the whole *essential Church* is in all matters

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which

which Parents may teach their Children for doctrines of faith? So that if Children are not bound to believe what their Parents teach them, till they know they teach nothing but what the whole *Church* teaches, it is the most compendious way to teach them they are not bound to believe at all. But if this distinction be admitted, as Mr. S. makes much use of it, then it appears, how errors may come into the Church at first under the notion of *speculations*, and by degrees to be delivered as points of *faith*, by which means those things may be received in the *Church*, for such, which were never delivered by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, and yet no age conspire to deceive the next, which was the thing to be shewed.

§ 7.

This is one way of shewing how *errors* may come into the *Church*, without one ages conspiring to deceive the next; but besides this, there are several others I might insist upon; but I shall mention only two more:
 1. Misinterpreting the sence of *Scripture*. 2. Supposing it in the power of some part of the *Church* to oblige the whole

whole in matters of faith. For the *first* we are to consider, that no imaginable account can be *given* either of the writing or universal reception of the *Books* of the *New Testament*, if they were not designed for the preservation of the doctrine of *Christ*. And although it should be granted possible for the main and fundamental articles of Christian faith (such as the *Apostles Creed* gives a summary account of) to have been preserved by the help of tradition ; yet, unless we be extremely ungrateful, we cannot but acknowledge, that *God* hath infinitely better provided for us, in not leaving the grounds of our *Religion* to the meer *breath* of the people, or the care of Mothers instructing their *Children* but hath given us the certain records of all the doctrines and motives of faith, preserved inviolably from the first ages of the *Church*. And when the *Church* saw with what care *God* had provided for the means of faith, *oral tradition* was little minded ; thence the memory of those other things not recorded in *Scripture* is wholly lost ; all the care was employed in searching, preserving,

and delivering these *sacred Books* to posterity. To these the primitive *Church* still appeals; these they plead for against all adversaries, defending their authority, explaining their sense, vindicating them from all corruptions. Tradition they rely not on, any further than as a testimony of the truth of these records, or to clear the sense of them from the perverse interpretation of those *Hereticks* who pretended another kind of tradition than what was in *Scripture*. And when these were silenced, all the disputes that arose in the *Church* concerning matters of faith, was about the sense of these Books; as is evident by the proceedings in the case of *Arius* and *Pelagius*. Wherein tradition was only used as a means to clear the sense of the *Scriptures*, but not at all as that which the faith of all was to be resolved into. But when any thing was pleaded from tradition, for which there was no ground in *Scripture*, it was rejected with the same ease it was offered; and such persons were plainly told, this was not the *Churches* way; if they had plain *Scripture*, with the concurrent sense

sense of *Antiquity*, they might produce it, and rely upon it. So that the whole use of *tradition* in the primitive *Church* (besides attesting the Books) was, to shew the unreasonableness of imposing senses on *Scripture*, against the universal sense of the *Church* from the *Apostles* times. But as long as men were men, it was not avoidable, but they must fall into different apprehensions of the meaning of the *Scripture*, according to their different judgments, prejudices, learning, and education. And since they had all this apprehension, that the *Scripture* contained all doctrines of faith, thence as men judged of the sense of it, they differed in their apprehension, concerning matters of faith. And thence errors and mistakes might easily come into the *Church*, without one age conspiring to deceive the next. Nay, if it be possible for men to rely on tradition without *Scripture*, this may easily be done; for by that means they make a new rule of faith, not known to the primitive *Church*, and consequently, that very assertion is an error in which the former age did not con-

spire to deceive the next. And if these things be possible, M. S's. demonstration fails him ; for hereby a reasonable account is given, how errors may come into a *Church* without one age conspiring to deceive another. Again, let me enquire of Mr. S. whether men may not believe it in the power of the ruling part of the *Church*, to oblige the whole to an assent to the definitions of it ? To speak plainer, is it not possible for men to believe the *Pope* and *Council* infallible in their decrees ? And I hope the *Jesuits* (as little as Mr. S. loves them, or they him) may be a sufficient evidence of more than the bare possibility of this. If they may believe this, doth it not necessarily follow, that they are bound to believe whatever they declare to be matter of faith ? Supposing then, that *Transubstantiation*, *Supremacy*, *Invocation* of *Saints*, were but *private opinions* before, but are now defined by *Pope* and *Council*, these men cannot but look on themselves as much obliged to believe them, as if they had been delivered as matters of faith, in every age since the *Apostles* times. Is it now repugnant to common sense, that

that this opinion should be believed or entertained in the *Church*? if not, why may not this opinion be generally received? if it be so, doth it not unavoidably follow, that the faith of men must alter according to the *Churches* definitions? And thus *private opinions* may be believed as *articles of faith*, and *corrupt practices* be established as *laudable pieces of devotion*, and yet no one age of the *Church* conspire to deceive another. Thus I hope Mr. S. may see how far it is from being a *self-evident principle*, that no error can come into the *Church*, unless one age conspire to deceive the next in a matter of fact, evident in a manner to the whole world. Which is so wild an apprehension, that I believe the *Jesuits* cannot entertain themselves without smiles, to see their *domestick adversaries* expose themselves to contempt with so much confidence.

Thus I come to the reason I gave, why there is no reason to believe that this is the present sense of the *Roman Church*. My words are, *For I see the Roman Church asserts, that things may*

§ 3.

be de fide in one age, which were not in another; at least Popes and Councils challenge this; and this is the common doctrine maintained there, and others are looked on as no members of their Church who assert the contrary; but as persons at least meritoriously, if not actually excommunicate. Where then shall I satisfy my self, what the sense of your Church is, as to this particular? Must I believe a very few persons, whom the rest disown as heretical and seditious? or ought I not rather to take the judgment of the greatest and most approved persons of that Church? And these disown any such doctrine; but assert, that the Church may determine things de fide, which were not before. In answer to this Mr. S. begs leave to distinguish the words de fide, which may either mean Christian faith, or points of faith taught by Christ; and then he grants, 'tis nonsense to say, they can be in one age, and not in another. Or de fide may mean obligatory to be believed. In this latter sense none I think (saith he) denies things may be de fide in one age and not in another; in the former sense none holds it. Upon which very triumphantly

phantly he concludes, *What's now become of your difficulty? I believe you are in some wonderment, and think I elude it rather than answer it; I shall endeavour to unperplex you.* I must confess it a fault of humane nature, to admire things which men understand not; on which account I cannot free my self from some temptation to that he calls *wonderment*; but I am presently cured of it, when I endeavour to reduce his distinction to reason. For instead of explaining his terms, he should have shewed how any thing can be obligatory to be believed in any age of the *Church*, which was no point of faith taught by *Christ*, which notwithstanding his endeavour to *unperplex me*, is a thing as yet I apprehend not; because I understand no obligation to faith to arise from any thing but *divine revelation*; and I do not yet believe any thing in *Christian doctrine* to be divinely revealed, but what was delivered by *Christ* or his *Apostles*. And my *wonderment* must needs be the greater; because I suppose this inconsistent with Mr. *S's* principles. For oral tradition doth necessarily imply, that

that all points of *faith* were first taught by *Christ*, and conveyed by tradition to us ; but if a thing may be *deside* in this latter sense, which was not before, what becomes of resolving *faith* wholly into *oral tradition*? For *faith* is *resolved* into that from whence the *obligation* to *believe* comes ; but here Mr. *S.* confesses, that the obligation to believe doth arise from something quite different from *oral tradition* ; and therefore *faith* must be resolved into it. Besides, all the sense I can find in that distinction, is, that men are bound to believe something in one age, which they were not in another ; and if so, I shall desire Mr. *S.* to *unperplex me* in this, how every age is bound to believe just as the precedent did, and yet one age be bound to believe more than the precedent. But however, I am much obliged to him for his endeavour to *unperplex me* as he speaks ; for really I look on no civilities to be greater than those which are designed for clearing our understandings ; so great an adorer am I of true reason and an intelligible Religion. And therefore I perfectly agree with

with him in his saying, *that Christianity* P. 206.
aims not to make us beasts, but more perfectly men; and the perfection of our manhood consists in the use of our reasons. From whence he infers, that it is reasonable, consequences should be drawn from principles of faith, *which, he saith, are of two sorts; first such as need no more but common sense to deduce them; the others are such as need the maxims of some science got by speculation to infer them; and these are Theological conclusions: The former sort, he tell us, the Church is necessitated to make use of upon occasion, i. e. when any Heretick questions those, and eadem opera, the whole point of faith it self, of which they were a part; as in the case of the Monothelites, about Christs having two wills.* But all this while, I am far enough from being *unperplexed*; nay by this discourse, I see every one who offers to *unperplex* another, is not very *clear* himself. For since he makes no *Theological conclusions* to be *de fide*, but only such *consequences as common sense draws*, I would willingly understand how *common sense* receives a new obligation to faith. For to my
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apprehension the deducing of consequences from principles by *common sense*, is not an act of believing, but of knowledg consequent upon a principle of faith. And the meaning is no more than this, that men, when they say they believe things, should not contradict themselves, as certainly they would do, if they deny those *consequences* which *common sense* draws from them. As in the case of the *Monothelites*, for men to assert that *Christ* had *two natures*, and yet not *two wills*; when the *will* is nothing else but the inclination of the *nature* to that *good* which belongs to it. So that there can be no distinct obligation to believe such *consequences* as are drawn by common sense; but every one that believes the *principles* from whence they are drawn, is thereby bound to believe all the consequences which immediately follow from them. Indeed the *Church*, when people will be so unreasonable to deny such things, may explain her sense of the article of faith in those terms which may best prevent dispute; but this is only to discriminate the persons who truly believe this article, from such

such as do not. Not that any new obligation to faith results from this act of the *Church*; but the better to prevent cavils, she explains her sense of the article itself in more explicate terms. *Which, as he saith, is only to put the faith out of danger of being equivocated.* Which is quite another thing from causing a new obligation to believe. As suppose the *Church*, to prevent the growth of the *Socinian doctrine*, should require from men the declaring their belief of the *eternal existence* of the *Son of God*; Would this be to bind men to believe something which they were not bound to before? No, but only to express their assent to the *Deity* of Christ in the simplest terms; because otherwise they might call him *God* by *office*, and not by *nature*. Now how can any one conceive, that any should be first obliged to believe, that *Christ is God*, and yet receive a new obligation afterwards to believe his *eternal existence*? Thus it is in all *immediate consequences* drawn by *common sense*; in all which, the primary obligation to believe the thing it self, extends to the belief of
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it in the most clear and least controverted terms, which are not intended to impose on mens faith, but to promote the *Churches* peace. For neither is there a new object of faith; for how can that be, which common sense draws from what is believed already? neither is there any *infallible proposition*, unless *common sense* hath usurped the *Popes* prerogative. But Mr. S. offers at a reason for this, which is, *that none can have an obligation to believe what they have not an obligation to think of; and in some age the generality of the faithful have no occasion, nor consequently obligation to mind, reflect, or think on those propositions involved in the main stock of faith. From whence, he saith, it follows, that a thing may be de fide, or obligatory to be believed in one age, and not in another.* But let Mr. S. shew, how a man can be obliged to believe any thing as an article of faith, who is not bound to think of all the immediate consequences of it? Because faith is an act of a reasonable nature, which ought to enquire into the reasons and consequences of things which it doth believe. But
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Mr. S's mistake lies here, in not distinguishing the obligation to believe from the obligation to an explicate declaration of that assent. The former comes only from God, and no new obligation can arise from any act of the Church; but the latter being a thing tending to the Churches peace, may be required by it on some occasions; *i. e.* when the doctrine is assaulted by Hereticks, as in the time of the four first General Councils; but still a man is not at all the more obliged to assent, but to express his assent in order to the Churches satisfaction.

But Mr. S. supposes me to enquire, *how the Church can have power to oblige the generality to belief of such a point.* To which his answer is, *she obliges them to believe the main point of faith, by virtue of traditions, being a self-evident rule, and these implied points by virtue of their being self-evidently connected with those main and perpetually used points, so that the vulgar can be rationally and connaturally made capable of this their obligation.* But we are not now enquiring, what the obligation to believe the main points of faith

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p. 208.

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faith is, nor whether tradition be a *self-evident rule*; but how there should be a *new obligation to believe something self-evidently connected with the former points*, is beyond my capacity to understand. And they must be *vulgar understandings* indeed, that can *rationally and connaturally* be made capable of such an obligation. For if it be *self-evidently connected* with the main points, no one can believe the one, without believing the other; for nothing is *self-evident*, but what a man assents to at the first apprehension of it; and if he doth so, how comes there a new obligation to believe it? Is it possible to believe, that any thing consists of *parts*, and not believe that *that whole is greater than any of those parts*? for this is a thing *self-evidently connected* with the nature of the *whole*. But these are *self-evident riddles*, as the former were *unintelligible demonstrations*. And yet, though these be rare *Theories*, the application of them to the case of the *Roman Church* exceeds all the rest. Whence, saith he, *the Government of our Church is still justified to be sweet, and according to right nature, and yet forcible and efficacious.* Although

Although I admire many things in Mr. S's Book, yet I cannot say I do any thing more than this passage, that *because men are obliged to believe no implied points, but such as are self-evidently connected with the main ones, therefore the Government of the Roman Church is sweet, and according to right nature, &c.* Alas then, how much have we been mistaken all this while, that have charged her with imposing hard and unsufferable conditions of communion with her! No, she is so gentle and sweet, that she requires nothing *but the main points on the account of a self-evident rule, and implied points by reason of self-evident connexion with the former.* I see Mr. S. (if he will make good his word) is the only person who is ever like to reconcile me with the *Church of Rome*: For I assure you, I never desire any better terms of communion with a *Church*, than to have no main points of faith required from me to assent to, but what are built on a *self-evident rule*, nor any implied points but such as are *self-evidently connected* with the former. And no work can be more easie, than to convince me up-

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on these grounds; for all endeavors of proof are taken away by the things being said to be *self-evident*. For the very offer of proof that they are so, *self-evidently* proves they are not so: For what ever is proved by something beside it self, can never be said without a contradiction to be *self-evident*. But not to tye up Mr. S. from his excellent faculty of proving, if Mr. S. will prove to me that any of the points in difference between us, as *Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Supremacy of the Roman Church, &c.* have any *self-evident connexion* with any main point of faith in the *Apostles Creed*, I solemnly promise him to retract all I have writ against that *Church*; so far shall I be from needing a new obligation to believe them. But if these be so remote from *self-evidence*, that they are plainly repugnant to sense and reason (witness that self-evident doctrine of *Transubstantiation*) what then must we think of Mr. S.? Surely the least is, that since his being a *Roman Catholick*, his mind is strangely inlighrned, so far that those things are *self-evident* to him, which are contradictions to the rest of the world.

Rule of Faith.

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world. But withal M. S. acquaints us with another mystérie ; which is, *how these points descended by a kind of tradition, and yet confesses, they were never thought of or reflected on by the generality, till the Church took occasion to explain them.* Such a silent tradition doth very suitably follow the former self-evident connexion. For he that can believe Transubstantiation to be self-evident, no wonder if he believes that to have been delivered by a constant Tradition, which was never heard of from the Apostles times to these.

Now Mr. S. is pleased to return to me, and draws up a fresh charge against me, which is, *that I act like a Politician, and would conquer them by first dividing them, and making odious comparisons between two parties of Divines.* But to shew us how little they differ, he distinguishes them, as faithful, and as private discoursers ; in the former notion, he saith, *they all hold the same divinely constituted Church-Government, and the same self-evident rule of faith; but as private discoursers he acknowledges they differ in the explication of*

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their belief. I meddle not here with the *Government* of their *Church*, (which I have elsewhere proved to be far enough from being *divinely constituted*) but with the *rule of faith*; and the question is, whether the *infallibility of oral tradition*, be that *self-evident rule* which that *Church* proceeds on; *Yes*, faith *Mt. S. they are all as faithful agreed in it, but as discourses they differ* about it. Which in short is, that all in the *Church of Rome*, who are not of his opinion, know not what they say; and that they oppose that which they do really believe. Which in plain *English* is, that they are egregious dissemblers and prevaricators in *Religion*; that they do intolerably flatter the *Pope* and *present Church* with loud declamations for their infallibility, but they do really believe no such thing, but resolve all into oral tradition. But is not this an excellent agreement among them, when *Mr. White* and his party not only disown the common doctrine of the infallibility of *Pope* and *Councils*, but dispute against it as pernicious and destructive to *Christian faith*? on the other side the
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far greater part of *Romanists* say, there can be no certainty of faith, unless there be an *infallible* divine testimony in the *present Church*, and this lodged in *Pope and Councils*; that those who endeavour to overthrow this, are *dangerous, seditious, heretical* persons, Accordingly their Books are censured at *Rome*, their opinions disputed against, and their persons condemned. And yet all this while, we must believe that *these* stick together like two smooth Marbles *as faithful*, though they are knocked one against another *as discoursers*; and that they perfectly agree in the same *self-evident rule of faith*, when all their quarrels and contentions are about it; and those managed with so great heat, that *heresie* is charged of one side; and *Arch-heresie* and *undermining Religion* on the other. Doth he think we never heard of Mr. *White's Sonus Succinae*, nor of that *Chapter* in it, where he saith, *that the doctrine of Pope and Councils infallibility tends to overthrow the certainty of Christian faith*; and that the propagating such a doctrine is a greater crime than burning Temples, ravishing the sacred Virgins on the Altars, tram-

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De fide &
Theol. tract.
2. sect. 22.
p. 158.

pling on the body of Christ, or the sending the Turk or Antichrist into Christian Countreys ? Or doth he think we can believe that the Pope and Cardinals, the Jesuites and all the Papists of forreign Countreys do as faithful agree with Mr. White in this ? It seems not so by the proceedings in the Court of Rome against him, in which as appears by the censure of the Inquisition against him, dated 17. November 1661. his doctrine is condemned not only as false, seditious and scandalous, but as heretical and erroneous in faith. And if it were not for this very doctrine he was there censured, why doth Mr. White set himself purposely to defend it in his *Tabule suffragiales* ? If these then do agree as faithful, who cannot but envy the excellent harmony of the Roman Church, in which men condemn each other for hereticks, and yet all believe the same things still ? Well Sir, I am in hopes upon the same grounds Mr. S. will yield us the same charity too, and tell us that we agree with him as faithful, only we differ a little from him as discourses ; for I assure you, there is as great reason: the only difference is, we give them not such

such *ill words* as they do each other. For let Mr. *S.* shew us wherein we differ more from him about the *Rule of Faith*, than they do among themselves: For Mr. *White* when he hath said, *that all kind of heresie doth arise from hence, that men make the holy Scripture, or a private spirit, the rule of faith*; he presently adds, *it is all one, if one make Councils or Pope any other way than as witnesses to be the authors of faith*. For, faith he, *this is to subject the whole Church to that slavery, to receive any error for an article of faith, which they shall define, or propose modo illegitimo, i. e. any other way then as witnesses of tradition*. Either then we differ from Mr. *S.* only *as discoursers*, or he and his Brethren differ from each other more then as such. And so any one would think who reads the oppositions and arguments against each other on this subject, particularly Mr. *Whites Tabulae suffragiales*. But let Mr. *White* say what he will Mr. *S.* tells me, *I am not aware how little they differ even as Divines*. The more shame for them to have such furious heats and oppositions where there is

so little difference. But as little as they differ, Mr. *White* thinks it safer to talk of their unity in *England*, than to try whether they be of his mind at *Rome*, by going thither to clear himself; for he justly fears he should find them differ from him some other way than *as bare discoursers*. Yet let us hear Mr. *S's* reason; for, saith he, *though some speculators attribute to the Church a power of defining things not held before, yet few will say she hath new revelations or new articles of faith*. But we know the temper of these men better than to rely on what they barely say. For they say what they think is most for their purpose; and one of Mr. *White's* adversaries, (if himself may be credited) plainly told him, *if the doctrine of the Popes infallibility were not true, yet it ought to be defended because it was for the interest of the Church of Rome*: for which he is sufficiently rebuked by him. It is one thing then what they say, and another what necessarily follows from the Doctrine which they assert. But for plain dealing commend me to the *Canonists*, who say expressly, the *Church* (by which they

Tabul. suff.
rag. p. 3. 18.

they mean the *Pope*) may make *new articles of faith* : and this is the sense of the rest, though they are loth to speak out. Else Mr. *White* was much too blame in spending so much time in proving the contrary. But what man of common sense can imagine that these men can mean otherwise, who assert such an infallibility in *Pope* and *Councils*, as to oblige men under pain of eternal damnation to believe those things which they were not obliged to, before such a definition ? And what can this be else but to make new articles of faith ? For an article of faith supposes a necessary obligation to believe it : now if some doctrine may become thus obligatory by virtue of the *Churches* definition which was not so before, that becomes thereby an article of faith which it was not before. But these subtil men have not yet learnt to distinguish a *new doctrine* from a *new article of faith* : they do not indeed pretend that their doctrine is new, because they deny any such thing as new revelation in the *Church* ; but yet they must needs say, if they understand themselves, that old im-
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PLICIT doctrines, may become new articles of faith by vertue of the *Churches* definition. So little are they relieved by that silly distinction of *explicit and implicit delivery* of them, which Mr. S. for a great novelty acquaints us with. For what is only *implicitly delivered*, is no article of faith at all : for that can be no article of faith, which men are not bound to believe; now there are none will say that men are bound to believe under pain of damnation if they do not the things which are only implicitly delivered; but this they say with great confidence of all things defined by the *Church*. And let now any intelligent person judg; whether those who assert such things, do not differ wide enough from those who resolve all into *oral tradition*, and make the obligation to faith wholly dependent upon the constant tradition of any doctrine from age to age ever since the *Apostles* times.

§. II.

But Mr. S. is yet further displeased with me for saying, that *Pope and Councils challenge a power to make things de fide in one age, which were not in another*

another. For 1. he sayes, *I speak it in common, and prove it not.* 2. He adds, *That take them right, this is both perfectly innocent, and unavoidably necessary to a Church.* And is it not strange he should expect any particular proofs of so innocent and necessary a thing to the being of a *Church*? But he will tell me it is in his own sense of *de fide*, which I have already shewn to signifie nothing to his purpose. Let him therefore speak out whether he doth believe any such thing as inherent infallibility in the definitions of *Pope* and *Councils*? if not, I am sure at *Rome* they will never believe that Mr. *S.* agrees with them *as faithful*; if he doth, whether doth not such an infallible definition bind men by vertue of it to the belief of what is then defined? if it doth, then things may become as much *de fide* by it, as if they were delivered by *Christ* or his *Apostles*. For thereby is supposed an equal obligation to faith, because there is a proposition equally infallible. But will he say, the *Pope* doth not challenge this? Why then is the contrary doctrine censured and condemned at *Rome*?

Rome ? Why is the other so eagetly contended for, by the most zealous sons of that Church, and that not as a school-opinion, but as the only certain foundation of faith ? Mr. S. is yet pleased to inform me further, that nothing will avail me but this, if a Pope and Council should define a new thing, and declare they ground themselves on new lights, as did their first reformers in England : but I shall find, he saith, no such fopperies in faith-definitions made by the Catholick Church. Is this the man who made choice of reason for his weapon ? could there be a greater calumny cast on our Church, than to say her reformers grounded themselves on new lights : when our great charge against the Church of Rome is for introducing Novelties, and receding from pure and primitive antiquity. Whether the charge be true or no, yet sure it follows they did not declare they ground themselves on new lights; but expressly the contrary. Well, but Popes and Councils neither define new things, nor ground themselves on them : but what means the man of reason ? that they make no new definitions : surely

not ; for then what did they meet for ? and what mean their decrees ? but he intends, that they deliver no new doctrine : but how must that be tried ? or hath Mr. *S.* gained the opinion of infallibility both from *Pope* and *Councils*, that we must believe his bare word ? but we not only say but prove that even their last *Council* hath defined many things, which never were delivered by *Christ* or his *Apostles*. And it is to no purpose whether they say *they ground themselves on new lights*, or pretend to an *infallible assistance* ; for it comes all to the same at last. For if the assistance be infallible, what matter is it whether the doctrine hath been revealed or no ? for on this supposition it is impossible that *Pope* and *Council* should miscarry. Therefore if any *Church* be guilty of *fopperies* in faith-definitions, it must be that which you miscall *the Catholick*, but is more truly known by the name of the *Roman Church*. There is yet one piece of Mr. *S.*'s sagacity to be taken notice of as to this particular, which is, *that I p. 210.*
am at an end of my argument, because I say the opinion of the Pope and Councils
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infallibility is the common doctrine maintained: in which I confound the Church with the Schools, or some private opiners, and then carp at those mens tenets, And this is the force of all that Paragraph, He tells me, I want not wit to know that no sober Catholick holds humane deductions the rule of their faith, schoolmen definers of it, nor the Schools the Tribunal whence to propose it authoritatively and obligingly to the generality of the faithful. Neither doth Mr. S. want the wit to know that our present enquiry is concerning the sense of their present Church about the rule of faith. Since then Mr. S. must confess it necessary to faith to know what the certain rule of it is; let me enquire further, whether any particular person can know certainly what it is, unless he knows what the Church owns for her rule of faith; and whether that may be owned as the Churches judgement, which is stiffly opposed by the most interested persons in the Roman Church, and the most zealous contenders for it? Especially when the Pope who is said to be Head of the Church, condemns the doctrine

ctrine asserted, and that only by a small number of such who are as much opposed by themselves, as by any of us. Is it then possible to know the *Churches* judgement or not? if not, 'tis to no purpose to search for a *rule of faith*: if it be, which way can we come to know it, either by most *voices* or the sense of the *Governours* of the *Church*; either of the ways, I dare put it to a fair tryal whether *oral tradition*, or the *infallibility* of *Pope* and *Councils* be the Doctrine most owned in the *Church of Rome*? But Mr. S. still tells us, *these are only private opinators and schoolmen who assert the contrary doctrine to his*. But will not they much more say on the other side, that this way of *oral tradition* is a novel fancy of some few *half-Catholicks* in *England*, and tends to subvert the *Roman Church*. But is the present *Pope* with Mr. S. a *private opinator*, or was the last a *meer schoolman*? I am sure what ever Mr. S. thinks of him, he thought not so of himself, when he said, *he was no Divine* in the controversy of *Jansenius*. Doth the *Court of Rome* signifie no more with Mr. S. than
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a company of *Scholastick Pedants*, that know not what the sense of the *Church* is, concerning the rule of faith? I meddle not with the *Schools* but with the authority of the *present Church*, and him whom Mr. S. owns for the *head* of it : and is it consistent with his *headship* to condemn that doctrine which contains in it the only certain rule of faith? Mr. S. may then see they were no such impertinent *Topicks* which I insisted on, and as stout as Mr. S. seems to be, I am apt to believe he would not look on the censure of the *Inquisition* as an impertinent *Topick*.

§. 12

p. 211.

But at last Mr. S. offers at something whereby he would satisfy me of the sense of the *Church*, as to this particular, and therefore asks, *whether I never heard of such a thing as the Council of Trent?* I must ingenuously confess I have ; and seen more a great deal of it, than I am satisfied with. But what of that ? *there*, he tells me, *I may find a clear solution of my doubt by the constant procedure of that most grave Synod in its definitions.* That is,

is, I hope to find that oral tradition was acknowledged there as the only *self-evident* rule of faith. If I do this, I confess my self satisfied in this enquiry. But how much to the contrary is there very obvious in the proceedings of it? For in the *4th Session* the Decree is, *That Scripture and tradition should be embraced with equal piety and reverence*; and the reason is, *because the doctrine of faith is contain'd partly in Scripture, partly in tradition*; but what arts must Mr. S. use to infer from hence, that *oral tradition* in contradistinction to *Scripture* was looked on as the only rule of faith? I cannot but say, that the ruling men of that *Council* were men wise enough in their *generation*; and they were too wise wholly to exclude *Scripture*; but because they knew *that* of it self could not serve their purposes, they therefore help it out with *tradition*, and make both together the *compleat rule of faith*. Where I pray in all the proceedings of that *Council* doth Mr. S. find them define any thing on the account of *oral tradition*? instead of which we find continual bandyings
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about the sense of *Scripture* and *Fathers*, which might have been all spared, if they had been so wise as to consider, they could not but know the sense of the *present Church*, nor that of the *precedent*, and so up to the time of *Christ*. But they were either so ignorant as not to light on this happy invention; or so wise and knowing as to despise it. It is true, they would not have their doctrines looked on as *novelties*, therefore they speak much of *tradition* and the *ancient faith*; but that was not by what their *Parents* taught them, but what the *Fathers* of the *Church* delivered in their writings; for by these they judged of *traditions*, and not the *oral* way. And therefore I see little reason to believe, that this was either the sense of the *Council of Trent*, or is the sense of any number of *Roman Catholics*, much less of the *whole Church*, none excepted, as Mr. S. in his confident way expresses it. And if he will, as he saith, *disavow the maintaining any point, or affecting any way which is not assented to by all*, I hope to see Mr. S. retract this opinion, and either fall in with the *Court of Rome*,

or return, as reason leads him, into the bosom of the *Church of England*. But there seems to be somewhat more in what follows, *viz.* that though school-men question the personal infallibility of the Pope, or of the Roman Clergy, nay of a General Council, yet all affirm the infallibility of tradition, or the living voice of the Church essential; and this, he saith, is held by all, held firmly, and that it is absolutely infallible. To this therefore I answer, either Mr. S. means, that none do affirm that the universal tradition of the Church essential can err, or that the Church of Rome, being the Church essential, cannot err in her tradition: But which way soever he takes it, I shall easily shew how far it is from proving that he designs it for. For if he take it in the first sense, *viz.* that all the faithful in all ages could not concur in an error, then he may as well prove Protestants of his mind as Papists, for this is the foundation on which we believe the particular Books of Scripture. If this therefore proves any thing, it proves more then he intends, *viz.* that while we thus oppose each other, we do per-

fectly agree together; and truly so we do, as much as they do among themselves. But if Mr. S's. meaning be, *that all of their Religion own the Roman Church to be the Church essential, and on that account, that it cannot err*, (setting aside the absurdity of the opinion it self), I say from hence it doth not follow, that they make *oral tradition* the rule of *faith*, because it is most evident, that the ground why they say their *Church* cannot err, is not on Mr. S's. *principles*, but on the supposition of an *infallible assistance*, which preserves that *Church* from error. So that this falls far short of proving, that they are all agreed in this rule of *faith*; which is a thing so far from probability, that he might, by the same argument prove, that *Scripture* is owned by them all to be the rule of *faith*. For I hope *it is held by all*, and *held firmly*, that the living voice of God in *Scripture*, as delivered to us, is *infallible*; and if so, then there is as much ground for this as the other. But if we enquire what it is men make a *rule of faith*, we must know not only that they believe *tradition infallible*, but on what account they do

do so. For if tradition be believed *infallible* barely on the account of a promise of *infallibility* to the *present Church*, then the resolution of faith is not into the *tradition*, but into that *infallible assistance*; and consequently the rule of faith is not, what bare tradition delivers, but what that *Church*, which cannot err in judging tradition, doth propose to us. It is not therefore their being agreed in *general*, that *tradition is infallible*, doth make them agree in the same rule of faith; but they must agree in the ground of that *infallibility*, viz. that it depends on this, that no age could conspire to deceive the next. But all persons who understand any thing of the *Roman Church*, know very well that the general reason why tradition is believed infallible, is, because they first believe the *Church* to be *infallible*; whereas Mr. S. goes the contrary way, and makes the *infallibility* of the the *Church*, to depend on the *infallibility* of *tradition*. And therefore, for all that I can see, we must still oppose *private Opinions* in this controversie; the *Church of Rome*, not having declared her self at all

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on Mr. S's behalf, but the contrary, and the generality believing on the account of the present *Churches* infallibility. And it is strange Mr. S. should find no difference between mens resolving faith into common sense, and into the immediate assistance of the *Holy Ghost*. If this then *be the first principle of controversy*, as Mr. S. pretends, we see how unlikely they are to agree about other matters, who are so much divided about the principle of resolving them. And if this be the ground of faith, then most *Romanists* build on a wrong Foundation. But if the *infallibility of oral tradition* be the foundation on which *that formidable structure is erecting*, which he speaks of, wo then to the *Court of Rome*, for that is known to build on quite a different foundation. And if *this*, as he saith, *rises apace, and has advanced many stories in a small time*, it only lets us know how fast their divisions grow, and that they are building so fast one against another, that their *Church* will not stand between them. By this discourse, Mr. S. pretends to answer all those *If's* which follow;

low ; which are these, In case the Church may determine things de fide, which were not before, whether the present Church doth then believe as the precedent did or no ? if it did, how comes any thing to be de fide which was not before ? if it did not, what assurance can I have that every age of the Church believes just as the precedent did, and no otherwise ; when I see they profess the contrary ? And if a thing may be de fide in one age, which was not in a foregoing, then a Church may deliver that as a matter of faith at one time, which was never accounted so before ; by which means the present Church may oblige me to believe that as a matter of faith, which never was so in Christs or the Apostles times, and so the infallibility on the account of tradition is destroyed. To all which Mr. S. gives a very easie answer, viz. that they do not hold any disparate or unimplied points of faith ; but such as are involved and implied in the main point. This is no more easily said then understood ; for if these be implied in the former, how can there come a new obligation to believe them ? For to take his own instance,

will any man in his senses say, that he that believes *homo est animal rationale*, doth not believe *homo est animal*? and this he makes choice of as an example, *how one point of faith may be involved in another, so as to receive a distinct obligation to believe it.* I grant that *homo est animal* is involved in the other, but he that shall say, that after he hath assented to that proposition, *homo est animal rationale*, he may be capable of a new obligation to believe the former, which is involved in this, it may be justly questioned whether such an one, as to himself, can truly say, *homo est animal rationale*, or no. But after such rare subtilties, he doth very well to tell me, *that I ought to consider what Logick tells us, that the conclusion is in the premises, which reflection* (in his his court-like expression) he saith, *will much unblunder my thoughts.* But let the conclusion be as long as it will in the *premises*, will any man in his wits say, that he that believes the *truth* of the *premises*, is not hereby bound to believe the conclusion? and the more the one is involved in the other, the less is it possible

possible to make the obligation to believe them distinct. And it is hard for me to believe, that this is a way to *unblunder my thoughts*, when I see what horrible confusion such expressions argue in his own. Let the *Church* then clear her thoughts, never so much, yet all this cannot amount to a distinct obligation to believe those things which were involved before, but to a more explicit declaring them for the *Churches* peace and satisfaction. The only conclusion then involved in these premises, is, that if some things may be *de fide* in one age which were not in another, then the present age may believe otherwise than the precedent did. And if this doctrine be held in the *Church of Rome*, nothing can be more evident, than that Mr. S's. *first principle of controversie*, is far from being the doctrine of the *Roman Church*, which was the thing to be proved.

My second chief argument against this way of *oral tradition* was, *that it had not been owned in all ages of the Christian Church*; to manifest which, I enquired into the reason of the obligation

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gation in any age of the Church to believe and practise just as the precedent did. Mr. S. rejoices in that confession of mine, *that the only thing to be proved in this case is, that every age of the Church, and all persons in it, look'd on themselves as oblig'd not to vary in any thing from the doctrine and practise of the precedent age.* And I there offer the choice of three ways to prove it, *reason, testimony, or tradition*; he tells me, *he excepts the way of reason*; yet quarrels with me for pressing for a *demonstrative medium* to prove it, when yet Mr. S. seldom speaks under the rate of *demonstrations*. But he thereby notes the *unconsonancy of my carriage*, Wherein I wonder? That I should desire them to perform this promise, *viz.* to give us *demonstrations* for the grounds of faith? But faith withal, *he will yeild me the honour of professing I have no demonstration but probability for the ground of mine, and he makes this serious protestation for himself, that he should esteem himself very dishonest, did he assert and press on others any argument for the ground of his faith, which he judged not evident, that is de-*

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demonstrative. What is it these men mean, when they cry up their own way for *demonstrative*, and say that we build our faith meerly on *probabilities*? Do they say, that *Religion* is capable of strict and rigorous *demonstration*? If so, let them demonstrate the *being* of God and *immortality* of the *soul*, with as much evidence, as *that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles*. And it is strange, if they think *particular problems* in religion are more capable of *demonstration* than those *Theorems* on which they are built. But by all the enquiry I can make, all the difference between us is, that Mr. *S.* will have that called a *demonstration*, which is scarce a *probability*; and we call that *sufficient reason*, which any wise man may safely rely on in matters of *Religion*. In the mean time how much do we suffer by our modesty, that because we speak not as big as Mr. *S.* does, we must be censured presently to have nothing but *probabilities* for our faith? Are those bare *probabilities* which leave no suspicion of doubt behind them? And such we freely assert the grounds of our Religion to do; *i. e.* I assert, that
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we have the highest actual certainty of the truth of our *Religion*, which the mind of any reasonable man can desire; and if Mr. S's. *demonstrations* can do any more than this, let him tell us what it is. For my part, I know nothing higher in the mind of man than a *certain assent*, and if I did not think there was the greatest ground in *Religion* for that, I abhor dissimulation so much, that I should leave off perswading men to embrace it. And if any men have made us shy of the word *demonstration* and *infallibility*, they are such men as Mr. S. have done it, who talk of these things, when their arguments fall beneath some of the remotest *probabilities* we insist on. Nay, if there be any force in his *demonstration*, as to matters of fact, it hath been used by us long before his Book saw the light. But we love to give the true names to things, and not to lose our credit with all intelligent persons, by playing *Mountebanks* in *Religion*, crying up those things for *infallible cures*, which an ordinary capacity may discern the insufficiency of. But was it any thing but justice and reason in me to expect
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and call for a *demonstration* from them who talk of nothing under it? And therefore I said, *that it was impossible to demonstrate this way of oral tradition, unless it were proved impossible for men not to think themselves obliged to believe and do all just as their predecessors did.* For where the contrary is not only possible, but easily supposable, as that men may believe those things, as new articles of faith which are defined by *Pope and Council*, I wonder how Mr. S. will demonstrate, that men must look on themselves as obliged to believe just as their predecessors did? For I had thought demonstrations had never place in contingent propositions; but it seems Mr. S. who tells me, *Logick will unblunder my thoughts*, intends to make a new one for me. And I assure you so he had need, before I shall ever call his arguments demonstrations: and although he thinks himself *very honest* in calling them so, yet I should think him much *wiser* if he did not.

But before I come to the particular debate of these things, I freely tell him

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him, that I grant all he requests; I shall take along with me the nature of the matter in hand, the doctrines and practices spoken of, the manner of delivering them, the necessary circumstances which give weight to both; yet for all these, I cannot look on his way as *demonstrative*. And that both our meanings may be better understood, it is very necessary the Reader should have a true account of the state of the Question between us. And if he will believe me, I never intended to dispute with him or any one else, *whether men were bound to wear their clothes, or build houses, or manage estates just as their predecessors did*; but whether every age is obliged to believe and practise just as the precedent did, by virtue of *meer oral tradition*; for about that is all the controversie between us. I do not deny, but that a succeeding age may look on it self as bound to believe what the precedent did; but whether that obligation doth arise purely from the delivery of that doctrine by the precedent in the way of *tradition*, is the thing in dispute between us. For in case the ground of
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faith be wholly the written Word, conveyed from age to age, I deny not but an obligation to believe descends with the doctrine to every succeeding age. But that which Mr. S. is to prove is, *that abstractly from Scripture every age is absolutely bound to believe just as the precedent did*, without any enquiry whether that doctrine doth agree with *Scriptures* or no; but that he is therefore bound to believe all which is proposed to him, because it was the doctrine of the immediately preceding age. And this is that which I deny, and desire Mr. S. to prove. For which he first gives us a large instance in historical matters, and then comes to the matters of *Christian faith*. His instance is, *in Alexanders conquest of Asia, as to which he saith, that the memory of it is fresh and lively, though some thousand years since; and that the universal and strong perswasion of this matter of fact was not caused by Books, as Curtius his History, but by human tradition; that the continuance of this perswasion was the notoriety of the fact to the then li- vers, which obliged them to relate it to their posterity, and that this testifying*

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by the fore-fathers, was that which obliged posterity to believe things, as true because there could be no imaginable motive why the whole world should conspire to deceive them, or be deceivable in their sensations; on which principle it passed to the next age, and so came down by way of tradition to our dayes; & the obligation to believe in every age depended upon this, that the senses of the first could not be deceived; and having this security in every age, that no one would conspire to deceive the next, it follows, that no age could say a former age testified so, unless it did; so therefore, saith he, it follows demonstratively, that it was testified; and so the descendents in every age to the very end of the world have the same obligation to believe their immediate fore-fathers, saying it was testified by theirs, and so to the very first, who were witnesses of his actions. This is the substance of what he more largely discourses in several Paragraphs; which when he hath done, he tells me, he expects what I will reply to this discourse. Not to frustrate therefore his expectation, and in order to the Readers satisfaction, we are to consider, that

that in the present case there are two distinct questions to be resolved : 1. How a *matter of fact* evident to the world comes to be conveyed to posterity ? 2. By what means a compleat history of all passages relating to it may be conveyed ? As to the first, I grant that a *fact* so notorious as *Alexanders* conquest of *Asia* might have been preserved by human tradition, and conveyed in a certain way from one age to another. But if we enquire into that which is alone proper to our question, *viz.* by what means we may judge what is *true* and *false* as to the *particulars* of that conquest, then I deny that bare *tradition* is to be relied on in this case. For the certainty of conveyance of all particulars doth depend not upon the *bare veracity*, but the *capacity* and *skill* of *communicating* from one age to another. For which one would think we need no clearer evidence than the consideration of the different account of former *times* in the several Nations of the world. For who can imagine, but the *barbarous Nations* were as unwilling to deceive their posterity as any other ? yet we

see a vast difference in the *histories* of former *ages* among them, and more civilized people. And I wish Mr. S. would rather have instanced in some history which had been preserved merely by tradition, and not in such a one, which, if any other, hath been most carefully recorded and propagated to posterity. If Mr. S. would have undertaken to have told us, who they were that first peopled *America*, and from what place they came, by the *tradition* of the present inhabitants, and what famous actions had been done there in former ages, we might have thought indeed, that *sole tradition* had been a very safe way to convey matters of fact from one age to another. But since all Mr. S's. arguments will hold as well for the *Scythians* and *Americans*, and the most barbarous Nations, as the most civil and polite; what reason can Mr. S. give, why there is not among them as certain an account of former ages, as among the *Greeks* and *Romans*? Were not their *senses*, who saw those matters of fact, as incapable of being *deceived* as others? Was not every age among

among them as unwilling to deceive their posterity as elsewhere? Yet notwithstanding the force of Mr. S's demonstration, we see for want of *letters* how grossly ignorant they are of what was done before them. And if this principle were true, why have we not as true an account of the *eldest* ages of the world, as of any other? Nay, why were *letters* invented, and writing ever used, if tradition had been found so infallible? But it is one thing superficially to discourse what is impossible should be otherwise, and another to consider what really hath been in the world. Doth not the constant experience of all times prove, that where any *history* hath not been timely recorded, it hath been soon corrupted by notorious falsities, or obscured by fabulous reports? As we see among our selves, what difference there is in point of certainty between the several stories of *K. Arthur* and *William the Conqueror*; what will Mr. S. say, that those who lived in *K. Arthur's* time could not know what he did, or that they conspired to deceive their posterity? But if tra-

dition be so *infallible*, why have we not the ancient story of *Britain* as exact as the modern ? If Mr. S. will impute it to the *peoples ignorance, want of letters, frequent conquests* by other Nations, and *succeeding barbarism*, he may easily find how many ways there are for *matters of fact* to be soon lost or corrupted, when they have not been diligently preserved by authentick records ; and that without one age conspiring to deceive another. But notwithstanding Mr. S's confidence, I cannot think it possible for Mr. S. to believe, that we should have had as true an account of *Alexanders conquest of Asia*, if *Arrian Curtius*, or *Plutarch* had never writ his story, as we have now. Yet this he must assert by virtue of his principle. And he that can believe that, I wonder he should scruple believing the *Popes infallibility* ; for certainly no principle of the *Jesuits* is more wild and absurd than this is. Besides, I admire how it came into Mr. S's head to think, no error could come into history *unless one age conspired to deceive another*, when we find no age agreed in the present
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matters of *fact* which are done in it, as to the grounds and particulars of them; to give Mr. S. an instance home to his purpose, in the late *Council of Trent* we see already what different representations there are made of it in so little a time as hath already passed since the sitting of it. One, though he had all the advantages imaginable of knowing all proceedings in it, living at the same time, conversing with the persons present at it, having the *memoires* and records of the *Secretaries* themselves, yet his story is since endeavoured to be blasted by a great person of the *Roman Church*, as fictitious and partial. We see then it is at least supposed that interest and prejudice may have a great hand in abusing the world in matter of story, though one age never agree to deceive another. And instead of being perswaded by Mr. S's demonstrations, I am still of the mind, that we have no sufficient security of the truth of any story, which was not written while those persons were in being who were able to contradict the errors of it. However I deny not, but some notorious

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matters of fact, such as *Alexanders* bare conquests of *Asia*, might by the visible effects of it be preserved both in *Asia* and *Greece* for a long time. But if we come to enquire particularly, whether this or that was done by him in his conquest, which is alone pertinent to our purpose, we have no security at all from tradition, but only from the most authentick records of that story. And by this, I hope Mr. S. will have cause to thank me for *unblundering his thoughts* (his own civil expressions), and shewing him how errors may come into a story without one age conspiring to deceive the next; and what a vast difference there is between preserving a bare matter-of fact, and all the particulars relating to it. And hereby he may easily see how far the obligation extends in believing the report of former ages. For there can be no obligation to believe any further than there is evidence of truth in the matter we are obliged to. If then there be not only a possibility, but a very great probability of mistakes and errors in matters of fact, I pray what obligation doth there ly upon men absolutely

lutely to believe what is delivered by the preceding age? But to put an issue to this controverſie, let Mr. S. examine himſelf, and try if he can name one ſtory that was never written, which was ever certainly propagated from one age to another by meer oral tradition; and if he cannot, he may thereby ſee how little real force his argument hath in the world. For all the force of tradition lies in an unqueſtionable conveyance of thoſe *Books* which contain in them the true reports of the actions of the times they were written in. But can Mr. S. think, that if the *Roman hiſtory* had never been written, it had been poſſible for us to have known what was done under the *Kings* and *Conſuls* as now we do? Yet if his principle holds, this neceſſarily follows; for *thoſe of that age could not but know them, and no age ſince could conſpire to deceive the next.* And from hence, the moſt uſeful conſequence of all is, that Mr. S. might have writ a hiſtory from the beginning of the world to this day, with a full relation of all *particulars*, if there had never been any *Book* written in the world be-

fore. And doth not Mr. S. deserve immortal credit for so rare an invention as this is, and all built on nothing short of *demonstrations*.

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But Mr. S. very prudently foresees, *what it is I must be forced to recur to, viz. that being baffled with his former demonstration, I have no other shift to betake myself to, but to say the case is different between histories and points of faith.* And therefore to bring his business home, he applies it at large to the delivery of the *Christian faith*, which that he might do in more ample sort, he very finely descants on the old Verse, *Quis, quid, ubi, &c.* containing the circumstances of human actions, and from every one of them derives arguments for the *infallibility* of oral tradition; which briefly and in plain *English* may be summed up thus; *Since the author of this doctrine was the Son of God, the doctrine it self so excellent, and delivered in so publick a manner, in the most convincing way, by miracle and good living, and for so good an end as to save mens souls, and that by writing it in mens hearts, and testified*

to others; and all this at a time when men might judg of the miracles and motives for believing it; therefore since in all these respects it was incomparably beyond the story of Alexanders conquests, it follows, that in a manner infinitely greater must the obligation be to believe Christs doctrine, than Alexanders or William the Conquerours victories, or any history of the like nature whatsoever. All which I freely grant, but cannot yet see how from thence it follows; that oral tradition is the only rule of faith, or the means whereby we are to judg what is the doctrine of Christ, and what not. Those arguments I confess prove, that the *Christians* of the first age were highly concerned to enquire into the truth of these things, and that they had the greatest reason imaginable to believe them; and that it is not possible to conceive that they should not endeavour to propagate so excellent a doctrine, and of so high concernment to the world. But the question is, whether abstractly from the *Books* written in the first age of the *Christian Church*, there is so much infallibility in the oral tradition of every age,

age, that nothing could be embraced for Christs doctrine which was not; and consequently, whether every age were bound to believe absolutely what was delivered it by the precedent for the doctrine of *Christ*? Mr. S. therefore puts himself to a needless task of proving that every age was bound to believe the *doctrine of Christ*, which I never questioned; but the dispute is, whether every age be bound on the account of *oral tradition* to believe what is delivered by the precedent for *Christs doctrine*. But it is to be observed all along how carefully Mr. S. avoids mentioning the *written Books* of the *New Testament*; because he knew all his game about oral tradition would be quite spoiled by a true stating the matter of fact in the first ages of the *Christian Church*. I hope he will not be angry with me, for asking him that question about the *Scripture*, which he asks me about the *Council of Trent*; *did he never hear of such a thing as the Scripture? or is it so hard to find it?* But if he hath heard of it, I intreat him to resolve me these *Questions*:

1. Whether he doth not believe, that
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the Books of the *New Testament* were written at such a time, when the matters of fact therein recorded, were capable of being thoroughly examined? which he cannot deny upon his own principle; for tradition being then infallible as to the *doctrine* of *Christ*, the writers of these Books cannot be conceived to deliver it amiss, unless they resolved to contradict the present tradition of the *Church*; which if they had done, those Books could never have found any reception among *Christians*. If tradition then convey the doctrine of *Christ* infallibly, these Books must convey it infallibly, because they contain in them the infallible tradition of the first age of the *Christian Church*; and were written at the time when many persons living had been able to disprove any thing contained therein repugnant to truth. And that these Books were written by those persons whose names they bear, I appeal to Mr. S's own rule, *Tradition*; for if that be infallible in any thing, it must be in this; and if one age could conspire to deceive another in a matter of such concernment, what

what security can be had, that it may not do so in all other things? 2. Whether he believes, that those whose intention was to write an account of the life, actions, and doctrine of *Christ*, did leave any thing out of their Books which did relate to them as of concernment for us to believe? For upon Mr. S's principles, any one may easily know what the tradition of the *Church* is; and especially such certainly who were either present themselves at the matters of fact, or heard them from those who were; and what satisfaction can any one desire greater than this? But the question is, whether this testimony were not more safely deposited in the *Church* to be conveyed by word of mouth, than it could be by being committed to writing by such who were eye and ear witnesses of the actions and doctrine of *Christ*? Upon which I advance some further *Queries*. 3. If oral Tradition were the more certain way, why was any thing written at all? It may be Mr. S. will tell us, for *moral instructions, and to give precepts of good life*; but then why may not these be as infallibly con-

conveyed by tradition as doctrines of faith? And why then were any matters of fact and points of faith inserted in the Books of the *New Testament*? By which it certainly appears, that the intention of writing them was to preserve them to posterity. Let Mr. S. tell me whether it was consistent with the wisdom of men, much less with the wisdom of an *infinite Being* to imploy men to do that which might be far better done another way, and when it is done can give no satisfaction to the minds of men? 4. Whether those things which are capable of being understood when they are spoken, cease to be so when they are written? For Mr. S. seems to understand those terms of a *living voice*, and *dead letters* in a very strict and rigorous manner; as though the sense were only *quick* when spoken, and became buried in *dead letters*. But Mr. S. seems with the sagacious *Indian* to admire how it is possible for *dead letters* and *unsenc'd characters* to express mens meanings as well as words. I cannot enter into Mr. S's apprehension, how 24 letters by their various disposition can express
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matters of faith? And yet to increase the wonder, he writes about matters of faith, while he is proving that matters of faith cannot be conveyed by writing. So that Mr. S's. own writing is the best demonstration against himself; and he confutes his own *Sophistry* with his fingers, as *Diogenes* did *Zeno's* by his motion. For doth Mr. S. hope to persuade men, that tradition is a rule of faith by his Book or not? if not, to what purpose doth he write? if he doth, then it is to be hoped some matters of faith may be intelligibly conveyed by writing; especially if Mr. S. doth it. But by no means we are to believe that ever the *Spirit of God* can do it. For whatever is written by men assisted by that, is according to him but a heap of *dead letters*, and *insignificant characters*; when Mr. S. the mean while is full of *sense* and *demonstration*. Happy man that can thus out-do infinite wisdom, and write far beyond either *Prophets* or *Apostles*. But if he will condescend so far as to allow that to inspired persons which he confidently believes of himself, *viz.* that he can write a Book full of *sense*, and that
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any ordinary capacity may apprehend the design of it, our controverſie is at an end ; for then matters of faith may be intelligibly and certainly conveyed to poſterity by the Books of *Scripture*; and if ſo, there will be no need of any recourſe to *oral tradition*. 5. If the Books of *Scripture* did not certainly & intelligibly convey all matters of faith, what made them be received with ſo much veneration in the firſt ages of the *Chriſtian Church*? which were beſt able to judg of the truth of the matters contained in them, and the uſefulneſs of the Books themſelves. And therein we ſtill find, that appeals were made to them, that they thought themſelves concerned to vindicate them againſt all objections of Heathens and others ; and the reſolution of faith was made into them, and not tradition, as I have already manifested, and muſt not repeat. 6. Whether it be in the leaſt credible, ſince the Books of *Scripture* were ſuppoſed to contain the doctrines of faith, that every age of the Church ſhould look on it ſelf as obliged abſolutely to believe the doctrine of the precedent by virtue of an oral-tradition? For ſince they reſolved

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solved their faith into the written Books, how is it possible they should believe on the account of an oral tradition? Although then the *Apostles* did deliver the doctrine of Christ to all their Disciples; yet since the records of it were embraced in the Church, men judged of the truth or falsehood of doctrines, by the conveniency or repugnancy of them to what was contained in those Books. By which we understand, that the obligation to believe what was taught by the precedent age, did not arise from the oral tradition of it, but by the satisfaction of the present age, that the doctrine delivered by it was the same with that contained in *Scripture*.

§ 16. It is time now to return to Mr. S. who proceeds still to manifest *this obligation in posterity to believe what was delivered as matter of faith, by the precedent age of the Church*; but the force of all is the same still; *viz. that otherwise one age must conspire to deceive the next*. But the inconsequence of that, I have fully shewed already, unless he demonstrates it impossible for errors to
come

come in any other way : For if we reduce the substance of what he saith to a Syllogistical form, it comes to this ; Where there is no possibility of error, there is an absolute obligation to faith ; but there is no possibility of error in the tradition of any age of the *Church* : *ergo* in every age there is an absolute obligation to believe the tradition of the present *Church*. The *minor* he thus proves ; If no age of the *Church* can be ignorant of what the precedent taught, or conspire to deceive the next, then there is no possibility of error coming into the tradition of the *Church* in any age ; but the antecedent is true, and therefore the consequent. Now, who sees not that the force of all this lies not in proving the *minor proposition*, or that no age could conspire to deceive another ? but the consequence, *viz.* that no error can come into a *Church*, but by a general mistake, in one whole age, or the general imposture of it which we utterly deny ; and have shewed him already the falseness of it from his own concessions. And I might more largely shew it from those Do-

ctrines or opinions which they themselves acknowledg to have come into their Church without any such general mistake or imposture, as the *doctrines* of *Papal infallibility*, and the common belief of *Purgatory*. The very same way that Mr. *White* and Mr. *S.* will shew us how these came in, we will shew him how many others came in as erroneous and scandalous as those are. For whether *they* account these matters of faith or no, it is certain many among them do, and that the far greatest number, who assert and believe them to be the doctrine of their *Church* too. If therefore these might come in without one age mistaking or deceiving the next, why might not all those come in the same way which we charge upon them as the errors of their *Church*? And in the same manner that corrupt doctrines come in, may corrupt practises too, since *these*, as he saith, *spring from the other*. He might therefore have saved himself the trouble of finding out how an acute Wit, or great Scholar would discover the weakness of this way. For without pretending to be either of these, I have found

found out another way of attacking it, than Mr. S. looked for; *viz.* from his own principles and concessions; shewing how errors might come into a Church, without a total deception or conspiracy in any one age. Which if it be true, he cannot bind me to believe what ever he tells me the present Church delivers, unless he can prove that this never came into the Church as a speculation or private opinion, and from thence by degrees hath come to be accounted a point of faith. Therefore his way of proof is now quite altered, and he cannot say we are bound to believe whatever the present Church delivers; for that which he calls the present Church, may have admitted speculations and private opinions into doctrines of faith; but he must first prove such doctrines delivered by Christ or his Apostles, and that from his time down to our age they have been received by the whole Church for matters of faith; and when he hath done this, as to any of the points in controversie between us, I will promise him to be his *Profelyte*. But he ought still to remember, that he

is not to prove it impossible for one whole age to conspire to deceive the next; but that supposing that it is impossible for any errors to come into the tradition of the Church. Let us now see what Mr. S. objects against those words I then used against the demonstrating this way; *It is hard to conceive what reason should enforce it, but such as proves the impossibility of the contrary; and they have understandings of another mould from others, who can conceive it impossible men should not think themselves obliged to believe and do all just as their predecessors.* And whatever Mr. S. says to the contrary, I cannot yet see, but that therein I argued *from the very nature and constitution of the thing.* For that which I looked for, was a *demonstration*, which I supposed could not be unless the impossibility of the contrary were demonstrated. But if it be possible for Men, *Christians*, nay *Romanists* to believe on other accounts than tradition of the precedent age, I pray what demonstration can there be, that men must think themselves obliged to believe and do all just as their predecessors

fors did? Surely if Mr. S's. fancy had not been very extravagant, he could never have thought here of *mens being obliged to cut their Beards, or wear such Garters and Hat-bands as their forefathers did.* For do I not mention *believing first, and then doing?* by which it were easie to apprehend, that I meant matters of faith, and such practices as flow from them. Neither was there any such *crafty and sophistical dealing* as he charges me with; for P. 235.

I am content his doctrine be taken in his own terms; and I have now given a larger and fuller account why I am far from being convinced by the way he hath used for resolving faith. Passing by therefore his challenge, which I accept of, as long as he holds to the *weapon of reason and civility*, I come to consider his last enquiry, *why I should come to doubt of such an obligation in posterity, to believe their ancestors in matters of faith;* and he judiciously resolves it into *a strange distortion of human nature*, but such as it seems, is the proper effect of the *Protestants temper*, P. 236.

which is, faith he, to chuse every one his faith by his private judgement, or wit, P. 237.

working upon disputable words. Which as far as we own it, is not to believe what we see no ground for; and if this be such a *distortion of human nature*, I envy not Mr. S's. uprightness and perfection. If he means that we build our faith on our private judgments, in opposition to *Scripture*, or the *universal tradition* of the *Church* in all ages, let him prove it evidently in one particular, and I engage for my self and all true *Protestants*, we will renounce the belief of it. If he hath any thing further to object against the grounds of our Religion, he knows where to attack me; let him undertake the whole, or else acknowledge it a most unreasonable thing thus to charge falsities upon us, and then say we have nothing else to say for our selves. We pretend not to chuse our faith, but heartily embrace whatever appears to have been delivered by *Christ* or his *Apostles*; but we know the *Church* of *Rome* too well to believe all which she would impose upon us, and are loth to have her chuse our Religion for us, since we know she hath chosen so ill for her self. But if Mr. S. will

will not believe me in saying thus, what reason have I to believe him in saying otherwise? Such general charges then signifie nothing, but every one must judg according to the reason on both sides.

I now come to the last part of my task; which is to shew, *that this way is repugnant to common sense and experience, and that the Church of Rome hath apparently altered from what was the belief of former ages.* To which purpose my words are, *It is to no purpose to prove impossibility of motion when I see men move; no more is it to prove that no age of the Church could vary from the preceding, when we can evidently prove that they have done it. And therefore this argument is intended only to catch easie minds that care not for a search into the history of the several ages of the Church, but had rather sit down with a superficial subtilty, than spend time in further enquiries.* But two things M. S. tells me are required ere I can see that their faith varies from the former; first to see what their Church holds now, and then to see

§. 17.

p. 238.

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what

what the former Church held before; and he kindly tells me, if he sees any thing, I see neither well. It seems I want Mr. S's spectacles of oral tradition to see with; but as yet I have no cause to complain of the want of them, but I see much better without them than with them. He tells me, I cannot see what their present Church holds, and therefore I cannot assure any what was held before; because, if I renounce tradition, I take away all means of knowing. The reason why I cannot candidly see (as he phrases it) what their Church holds now, is, because I cannot distinguish between faith and its explication, some Schoolmen and the Church. By which it seems it is impossible for me to know what their Church holds concerning Invocation of Saints, Worship of Images, Communion in one kind; for those are the points I there mention, wherein it is evident, that the Church of Rome hath receded from the doctrine and practise of the primitive Church. Or are these only the opinions and practises of some Schoolmen among them, and not the doctrine and practise of their Church? But that we might

might come to some fuller state of these controversies, I wish M. S. would settle some sure way whereby we might know distinctly what are the doctrines and practices of their Church. If the *Council of Trent* and *Roman Catechism* be said to be the rule of doctrine, I desire no other; so that those may be interpreted by practices universally allowed among them. As when that *Council* only defined, that *due honour be given to Saints*; the general practice of that *Church* may tell us what they mean by that *due honour*; and if that be not fair, I know not what is. But I see all the shift Mr. S. hath, is, when he is pinched, to say *these are the opinions of Schoolmen and private speculators, and not the doctrine of their Church*. And if such shifts as these are must serve the turn, I should wonder if ever he be to seek for an answer. But the shortest answer of all would be, that none but those of their Church can know what she holds; and therefore it is to no purpose for *Protestants* to write against her; or it may be, that none but Mr. S. and one or two more can tell; for many among them say,
those

p. 236.

those are the doctrines of their *Church* which they deny to be. So that except Mr. *White* and Mr. *S.* and some very few *demonstrators* more, all the rest are *School-men, private Opinators*, and not to be relied on. *But I cannot see what their Church held formerly neither.* No wonder at all of that; for if I cannot see an object so near me as the present *Church*, how can it be expected I should see one so much further off as the doctrine of former ages? And his reason is so strong, as may well persuade me out of one, at least, of my five senses. *For, saith he, if I question tradition, I question whether there be any doctrine delivered, and so any Fathers.* And is not this argued like a *Demonstrator*? First he supposes there never was any way used in the world but oral tradition, and then strongly infers, if I deny that, I can know nothing. But I can yet hardly persuade my self that the *Fathers* only sate in Chimney-corners teaching their Children by word of mouth, and charging them to be sure to do so to theirs; but as they loved preserving the doctrine of faith, they should have a great
care

care never to write down a word of it. But why, I wonder, should Mr. S. think, that if I do not allow of oral tradition, I must needs question whether there were any *Fathers*? I had thought I might have known there had been *Fathers* by their *Children*; I mean the *Books* they left behind them. But if all Mr. S. pleads for be only this, that no *Books* can be certainly conveyed without tradition, he dispute's without an adversary; but as I never opposed this, so I am sure it doth him little service. It is then from the *Books* of the *Fathers* that I find what the sense of the *Church* of their age was, and from thence I have shewed how vastly different the opinions and practices of the *Roman Church* are from those of the *primitive*. Although then I may not think my self obliged to believe all that the present *Church* delivers for matter of faith; yet I hope I may find what the opinions and practice of the former *Church* were by the records that are left of it. And the reason why I cannot think any one obliged to believe what every age of the *Church* delivers, is, because I think no
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man obliged to believe contradictions ; and I see the opinions and practices of several ages apparently contrary to each other.

§ 18.

Well, but I call this way a *superficial subtilty* ; and so I think it still ; so little have Mr. S's. demonstrations wrought upon me. *But*, saith he, *is that which is wholly built on the nature of things superficial ?* No ; but that which pretends to be so built, may. And of that nature I have shewed this way to be, and not the former. But that I may not think him *superficial* as well as his way, he puts a profound Question to me, *What do I think Controversie is ?* and that he may the better let me know what it is, he answers himself. *I deal plainly with you*, saith he, *you may take it to be an art of talking, and I think you do so, though you will not profess it ; but I take it to be a noble science.* But to let him see that I will deal as plainly with him, as he doth with me, I will *profess* it, that I not only think *Controversie* as usually managed, but some mens way of demonstrating (Mr. S. may easily know whom

whom I mean) to be a meer *art of talking*, and nothing else. But *he takes it to be a noble science* ; yes doubtless, if Mr. S. manage it, and he be the judg of it himself. His meaning I suppose is, by his following words, P. 240; *that he goes upon certain principles, and we do not.* We have already seen how certain his principles have been, and I should be somewhat ashamed of my *Religion* if I had no better. But what our *rule of faith* is, hath been amply discoursed already by you, and that in Mr. S's *clearing method*, that nothing is left for me to do, but to touch at what remains, and concludes this answer. I had the better to illustrate the weakness of that argument from *oral tradition*, brought an instance in that case parallel, *viz.* that if one ages delivering to another would prove that the faith of Christ was in every age unalterable, because no age did testifie any such alteration to be in it; by the same argument the world might be proved eternal, because no age did ever testifie to another, that the world was ever otherwise than it is. So that if oral tradition were only to be relied

lied on, there could be no evidence given of the worlds being ever otherwise than it is, and consequently the world must be believed to have been always what we see it is. This, as far as I can apprehend, is a clear and distinct ratiocination, and purposely designed to prove that we must admit of other rules to judg of alterations in the *Church* by, besides oral tradition. But Mr. S. (in his own expression) *strangely roving from the mark* I aimed at, professes *there is not a tittle in it parallel to his medium, nay, that he never saw in his life more absurdities couched in fewer words.* But I must take all patiently from a man *who still perches on the specifical nature of things, and never flags below the sphere of science.* Yet by his good leave, he either apprehends not, or wilfully mistakes my meaning; for my argument doth not proceed upon the belief of the worlds eternity, which, in his answer, he runs wholly upon as far as *eighthly and lastly*, but upon the evidence of oral tradition as to no discernable alteration in any age of it. For the Question between us, is, whether in matters of alteration in the

p. 241.

p 242.

the faith or practice of the Church, we are bound to rely only on the testimony of oral tradition; so that if no age can be instanced in wherein any alteration was made, and this delivered by that age, then we are bound to believe there hath been no alteration since *Christ* and the *Apostles* times; now I say, if this hold good, I will prove the world eternal by the same argument; taking this for our principle, that we are bound to rely only on oral tradition in the case, originally derived from the matter of fact seen by those of the first age; for that which never was otherwise then it is, is eternal; but we cannot know by oral tradition that the world ever was otherwise then it is; for no age of the world can be instanced in, wherein we have any testimony of any alteration that was in it. Either then we must believe that the world ever was what it is, *i. e.* eternal; or else we must say, that we are not to rely barely on oral tradition in this case, but we must judg whether the world were made or no, by other *mediums* of Scripture and reason. And
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this was all which I aimed at, *viz.* to shew that where there is no evidence from oral tradition; yet if there be *Scripture* and *reason*, there is sufficient ground for our faith to stand upon. And so I apply it to the present case; though we could not prove barely from the *tradition* of any one age, that there had been any alteration in the faith or practice of the *Church*; yet if I can prove that there hath been such from *Scripture* and *reason*, this is sufficient for me to believe it. And now I dare appeal to the indifferent Reader, whether this be so full of *absurdities*, or it be such a *rambling Chimerical argument* (as he calls it), *no two pieces of which hang together with themselves, or any thing else.* Which being expressions of as great modesty as science, I am content Mr. S. should bear away the honour of them and his demonstrations together.

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§, 19.

The last thing he quarrels with me for, is, that I say, *if we can evidently prove, that there have been alterations in the Church, then it is to no purpose*

purpose to prove that impossible which we see actually done. And this appears not only because the Scripture supposes a degeneracy in the Christian Church, which could never be, if every age of the Church did infallibly believe and practise as the precedent up to Christs time did; but because we can produce clear evidence that some things are delivered by the present Church, which must be brought in by some age since the time of Christ; for which I refer the Reader to what I had said about communion in one kind, invocation of Saints, and worship of Images: In all which, I say, I had proved evidently that they were not in use in some ages of the Christian Church; and it is as evident that these are delivered by the present Church, and therefore this principle must needs be false. In answer to this, Mr. S. wishes, I would tell him first what evidence means, whether a strong fancy, or a demonstration? I mean that which is enough to perswade a wise man, who judges according to the clearest reason, which I am sure is more than ever his demonstrations will do. But it is a pleasant specta-

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cle to see how Mr. S, layes about him, at my saying that the *Scripture* supposes a degeneracy in the Christian Church. *Incomparably argued!* saith he, *why, see we not the place? does it evidently speak of faith, or manners; the Universal Church, or particular persons? but be it in faith, be it universal, does it suppose this degeneracy already past, which is only proper to your purpose, or yet to come? That is, does it say there must be a total Apostacy in faith before the year 1664? Alas, he had forgot this.* Most incomparably answered! For if the degeneracy be in 1665. or any years after, what becomes of M. S's demonstration then, that no errors could come into the Church? but it seems his demonstration holds but till 1664. and I easily believe another year will never believe the truth of it. But if such a thing as a degeneracy be possible, how then stands the infallibility of tradition, when there can be no degeneracy without falling from the doctrine and practices of *Christ* and his *Apostles*? But that such a degeneracy hath already been in that which calls it self the *Catholick Church*,
and

and that both in faith and manners, I shall refer Mr. S to the learned Author of the late *Idea of Antichristianism* and *Synopsis Prophetica*, where he may find enough to persuade him that his demonstration was far from holding so long as 1664. And now I leave the Reader to judg whether the foregoing evidences against the infallibility of *oral tradition*, or Mr. S's. demonstrations have the greater force of reason in them. And if he will not stoop so far from the *height* of his *perch*, as to take notice of what I have elsewhere said, I am resolved to let him see I am not at all concerned about it: I begin to understand him so well by this *Appendix*, that I can give my self a reasonable account why he thought it not fit to meddle with any other part of my Book. But if Mr. S. be resolved not to answer any of the testimonies I there produce, unless I *P. 244* *single them out, and print them at the end of this Answer*, (*i. e.* remove them from that evidence which attends them in the *series* of the discourse) I can only say, he is the most imperious answerer I have met with, who is re-

An Appendix to the

solved never to deal with an adversary, but on his own unreasonable terms. Thus heartily wishing. Mr. S's. Science as great as his opinion of it, and a good effect of our endeavours to promote the one, by removing the other, I am

Sir,
Your affectionate friend
and servant,

London. June 28.
1665.

Edward Stillingfleet.

FINIS



Postscript.

SIR,

SInce the dispatch of the former Papers, I have met with another Treatise, wherein I find my self concerned, written by the Author of *Fiat Lux*, the Title whereof is *Diaphanta*: I am afraid the Title affrights you; for I assure you it is the most formidable thing in his whole Book. But the man is a very modest man, and hugely different from Mr. S's. humor; for he is so far from offering to demon-

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Postscript.

strate the grounds of faith; that all he pretends to in the title of his Book, is *to excuse Catholick Religion against the opposition of several Adversaries*. What fault I pray hath the *Catholick Religion* committed, that it must now come to be *excused* instead of being *defended*? But when I look into that part which concerns my self, I presently understand the meaning of it, which is not *to excuse Catholick Religion*, but *themselves* for not being able to *defend* it. For he very ingeniously tells us, *that faith is firm and constant, though all his talk for it be miserably weak: i.e.* he is sure they have an excellent Religion, though he knows not what to say for it; and their faith is a very good faith, but it hath not yet had the good fortune to be understood by them. For he acknowledges, *that as often as they dispute, they are beyond the business*, (so may any one believe, who reads their late Books,) which is in effect to say, there is no way left of disputing any longer with adversaries about their faith; only they must believe it stoutly themselves

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Postscript.

selves; but it is to no purpose to offer to defend it. Nay, it doth their faith a great deal of mischief; for, saith he, *in reading controversies, we see not so much the nature of the faith, as the wit of him who opposes or defends it.* From whence we may easily gather what unspeakable mischief they do their cause by writing for it. By which expressions, we may guess at what a low ebb the defence of their faith is among them: for the way now taken to defend it, is by disowning the defenders of it, and by saying that they only vent their own opinions; and though we confute them never so much, yet their faith holds good still. Was ever a good cause driven to such miserable shifts as these are, especially among those who pretend to wit and learning? One, he saith, *T. C.* vents a private opinion of his own, and it is not a pin matter whether it stand or fall; another, he saith the same of *I. S.* a third of *J. V. C.* and yet for all this, their religion is very firm and sure, and they are all at perfect agreement

Postscript.

about it. Is this the *victory over me*, Mr. S. mentions to be so easie a thing? I see that by the same figure M. S. calls his way of arguing demonstration, running out of the field shall be accounted conquering. For I never saw any person do it more openly than this Author does. For he plainly confesses, *that his Catholick Gentleman went quite besides his business, that he built upon indefensible principles, that his theological ratiocination was indeed pretty, but too weak to hold.* And are not we hugely too blame, if we do not cry up such mighty Conquerors as these are? Truly, Sir, I expect the very same answer should be returned to your Book; that Mr. S's argument is a pretty theological ratiocination; and that your answer is not unwitty: but though that way will not hold, another will. Thus, when they are beaten off *Infallibility*, they run to *Tradition*: and when they are again beaten off *Tradition*, then back again to *Infallibility*. So that the short of all their answers is, though such a one cannot defend our faith, yet I can;

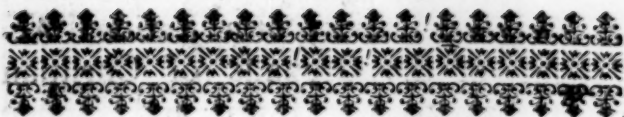
Postscript. &c.

can ; though I cannot, yet the faith is firm and constant still. I wonder what their *Superiors* think of this way of proceeding among them ; we should imagine, if they be so weak as they say themselves, they had much better keep them from appearing abroad, and exposing their cause so ridiculously to contempt. But it may be, they think their *faith* is the better as well as their *devotion*, for their *ignorance* : and that it would be a mighty disparagement to their cause, for such silly people to be able to defend it. It is enough for them to admire it themselves, and to say as their common people use to do, though they cannot defend it, yet there are some that can. And although it may be no particular person can do it, yet their cause is able to defend it self, But for all that I can see, by such kind of answers, the intention of them is, to intreat us not to triumph over the weakness of their present Writers, but to wait till the *Cause* it self thinks fit to write. And when it doth so, they may expect a
further

Postscript.

further answer; but it were a great piece of cruelty for us to hasten their ruine, who fall so fast before us by each others Pens.

FINIS.



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